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LESSONS FROM

SRI BHAGAVADGITA

BY

C. DURAISWAMI AIYANGAR, B.A.,B.L.,

ADVOCATE, CHITTOOR.

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LECTURE I.

In studying Gita there is a modern tendency to probe into the historicity and chronology and build up theories as to whether or not there was really a dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna and if so whether Gita is or is not a verbatim report of the dialogue; and in the discussion as to the date of Gita the modern mind is never satisfied until it is traced to the birth of Christ be it a B. C. or an A. D. It seems to me that neither question is really necessary for an ardent student of Gita. What does it matter whether Gita with all its eighteen chapters dealing with Karma, Gnana and Bhakti yogas was intended to induce Arjuna to enter into the impending war against relations, friends and gurus or whether it was a detached treatise on Yogas with a story built around it to become a sugar-coated quinine for a religious patient to swallow. Now-a-days Gita has come to be read on a large scale independently of the story of the Mahabharata. Hence Gita has become popular by its own merit and charms,

There is nothing original in Gita in the sense that the philosophical expositions as to the nature of Chit, Achit and Iswara are not already found in other works. Gita is merely a compendium, a condensed collection of ideas scattered over the vast ocean of Srutis

and Upanishads. It is the essence of the Upanishads and a handy treatise on the doctrine of reunion between the Jiva and God after ages of separation by the operation of the mysterious laws of Karma. It is what is known as the Mukti of the Jiva. This of course is the main theme and the sublimest theme of Gita. If this is lost sight of and if the teachings of Gita are interpreted in terms of lesser aims and objects in life, even then Gita helps to give proper guidance but the sublimity of Gita will thereby be sacrificed at the alter of trivialities and frivolities of lower life.

Though we are referred to the battle-field called Kurukshetra on which the Pandavas and the Kauravas fought their domestic war as the very place where the great teachings of Bhagavan were promulgated for the benefit of mankind for all time, we may easily see to which other Kurukshetra the teachings may be transferred with appropriateness.

The first Chapter in Gita begins with the significant sloka,

ధర్మక్షేత్రే కురుక్షేత్రే సమవేతా యుయుత్సవః ।
మామకాః పాండవాశ్చైవ కిమకుర్వత సంజయ ॥ (Ch. I-1)

The speaker here is Dhritarashtra the blind. The blind is the Tamas. Tamas is a dividing line between the manifest and the unmanifest "తమసః పరస్తాత్". Between the Nitya Vibhuti and the Lila Vibhuti stands the Tamas.

Dharmakshetra (ధర్మక్షేత్రం) is the human body. It is called Dharmakshetra because it is through the

performance of Dharma that the gates of Heaven will be opened to the Jiva — the occupier of the body his prison house for the time being.

Kurukshetra is the world outside the body as it is the field of action for the bonded soul. It is called the Kshetra of the Kurus or the Kauravas who represent the warring foes to the Jiva attaining Mukti. In the Dharmakshetra are assembled the Pandavas and in the Kurukshetra are assembled "my forces or my sons," the Kauravas. They are bent on fighting with each other. Question is asked as to what the respective parties in the war are doing and how they are composed. Every body is also a Dharmakshetra and Kurukshetra.

The answer gives a description of the respective forces. There are the Pandavas, *viz.*, Dharmaraja, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva with Sri Krishna as the Charioteer of Arjuna. Arjuna represents the Jivatman or the individual soul and Sri Krishna is the Paramatman as Antaryamin in the body. It is noteworthy that Arjuna is placed in the middle of the five; he is also made the leading person in the Gita. It is Arjuna that is always described as being in closest touch with Sri Krishna Paramatman. The entire Gita is for the salvation of Arjuna who therefore is the typical Jiva. Arjuna and Krishna stand as Nara and Narayana of the Gita.

The Jiva then—Arjuna—starts with the initial protective forces of Dharma, Virtue, Righteousness, in the shape of Dharmaraja. Dharma is the conscience, truth, love, purity. Then there is Bhima representing strength, power of resistance, power to resist all evil;

Nakula and Sahadeva represent simplicity, meekness, peace, sincerity, service, subordination and sacrifice.

Similarly on the Kaurava side there are various forces working against the Jiva. There are the three Gunas. Sattva (Bhishma) Rajas (like Drona) and Tamas (like Duryodhana). In the combination of the Trigunas there arises the obstacle to Mukti.

The opposing forces are described by Duryodhana as follows :

"అపర్యాప్తం తదస్మాకం బలం భీష్మాభిరక్షితమ్ ।
పర్యాప్తం త్విదమేతేషాం బలం భీమాభిరక్షితమ్ ॥"

(Ch. I-10).

Our forces are incomplete, imperfect or inadequate although they are led by the great Bhishma. Why is this force imperfect? The Leader is Bhishma. He is Sattvam. Any day Sattvic quality will help the Jiva and nct hinder its path to Mukti. To fight the Jiva and prevent its Mukti leadership must be given to *rajasam* or *tamasam*. But the leadership of the opposition was placed in *sattvam*, i. e., Bhishma. It so happened also in the story of the Mahabharata that Bhishmachaya surrendered himself to Pandavas and paved their way to success.

The Pandava forces are complete because Bhima is the leader. The Jiva has got a good resisting power. If then the Jiva utilises its power well there is Bhagavan also as the Charioteer to help.

It is significant also that Bhaghavan Sri Krishna is here described as the Charioteer of Arjuna the typical

Jiva. In describing the nature of the three *tattvas* Bhagavan is described as the Charioteer

యుగ్యస్యన్దనసారథిక్రమవతి త్రయ్యన్తసందర్శితే
తత్త్వానాం త్రితయే యథార్హవివిధవ్యాపారసంతానిని ।
హేతుత్వం త్రిషు కర్తృభావ ఉభయోః స్వాధీనతైకత్ర త
త్స్వామి స్వీకృతయద్భరోఽయమలసస్తత్ర స్వయం నిర్భరః ॥

The Chit, the Achit and Iswara are compared to the horses, the chariot and the charioteer respectively. In the Gita we find the same situation literally as well as figuratively.

Unity in multiplicity and diversity.

Now in our daily life we find at the outset nothing but multiplicity and variety. We see the distinction between man and lower animals; animate and inanimate objects; race and race; rich and poor and so on. So long as this multiplicity and variety are considered to be real, actions will also be varied. Ideas of superiority and inferiority are inevitable. Conduct is also based on these ideas. Hence there arise successes and defeats, pleasures and pains, likes and dislikes and so on.

Gita's first aim therefore is to teach the unity that will dispel the ideas of diversity. Now then the individual is first taught what he is really made up of. He has a body with limbs, senses and mind. These are all of the physical or *prakritic* contribution to his existence and motion. Every item of these physical or prakritic matter is to be found in the corpse when a man is dead. What then is the difference between the living body and the dead body? There was something which

sustained and regulated the actions or movements of the physical which is absent in the dead body. That then is known as the Jiva or soul. The Jiva or soul which sustains and regulates the bodily actions ought to be superior to the body. It is sentient; it is knowledge; it is self-luminous, it is unchangeable; imperishable, indestructible. It is eternal.

But the body grows from stage to stage from birth up to death.

దేహినోఽస్మిన్ యథా దేహే కౌమారం యౌవనం జరా ।
తథా దేహాంతరప్రాప్తిః ధీరస్తత్ర న ముహ్యతి ॥ (Ch. II-13)

There is a factor again which regulates the connection between the soul and matter and that is God or Paramtman — the Greatest Soul — Both Paramatman and Jivatman are known by the same nomenclature — *viz.*, Atman distinguished only by their degrees; limitations and want of limitations. They are then really akin to each other in essence. Thus Paramatman, Atman, and sarira or body co-exist everywhere. Body holds the Jiva within itself and the sustainer of the body as well as the enjoyer of the bodily actions is the Jiva. Both the Jiva and the body taken together are sustained by the will or the *sankalpa* of Paramatman who is the enjoyer of the combination of the Jiva and the body.

So far it is easily said, equally easily grasped also and perhaps easily believed to be true. This is a verbal teaching and a mental reception. This is all.

The next step is that what applies to one man applies to every item in the Universe, *viz.*, everywhere,

in every man, animal, plant organism, etc., there is the same combination of matter, soul and Paramatman. This is easily followed from the first lesson that a man is a combination of the three—Chit, Achit and Iswara. This also is easily said and grasped.

But what is difficult is the realization of these truths and what is more difficult still is the pursuit of a conduct in consonance with such realization.

It is on this conduct that Gita lays the greatest stress. As long as the soul is embodied, action of some kind is inevitable. Every action has some relation to other objects in the Universe. There is again a reaction on the self. It is therefore important that such actions and reactions must be so regulated as not to produce harmful effects on self or on others. If again when the self realised an awakening that its embodiment is but an imprisonment naturally there must be a desire to obtain freedom and restoration to its original fellowship with the Universal Soul or God. This aspect makes it necessary to regulate one's action in such a manner that he may utilimately secure that freedom from bondage which the sentient Soul craves for. Gita therefore takes all these aims of the Jiva and teaches how to conduct himself properly.

How then can a man, a Jiva in bondage, act in such a manner as to secure that harmony between himself and the rest of the Universe and between himself and God? This is the question that is solved in Gita in a most effective manner. Hence the Chapter on Karma Yoga becomes the quintessence of Gita.

The rule for action is thus enunciated :—

యజ్ఞార్థాత్కర్మణోఽన్యత్ర లోకోఽయం కర్మబన్ధనః ।
తదర్థం కర్మ కౌన్తేయ ముక్తసఙ్గస్సమాచర ॥ (Ch. III-9).

Every action must be for sacrifice — service to others. Any action that is intended for the benefit of one's own self will perpetuate the bondage. A man may earn money. In fact he ought to earn too. He must work for it. But in all this the purpose must be to serve others; to be useful to others. He must give up desires for personal benefits. Then alone it will be an action that will harmonise with the universe and God. At the very outset of creation that was the command of God, *viz.*, that the souls in bondage should get salvation only by sacrifice.

సహ యజ్ఞైః ప్రజాస్సృష్ట్వా పురోవాచ ప్రజాపతిః
అనేన ప్రసవిష్యధ్వమేష వోఽస్త్విష్టకామధుక్ ॥ (Ch. III-10)

God at the creation of the Universe seeing Souls mixed up with the Prakriti and the qualities according to the current of immemorial *karmas* advises "Do sacrifice and get your Salvation."

The plan of the Universe as designed by the Great Lord is based on sacrifice :—

అన్నాద్భవన్తి భూతాని పర్జన్యాదన్నసమ్భవః ।
యజ్ఞాద్భవతి పర్జన్యో యజ్ఞః కర్మసముద్భవః ॥
కర్మ బ్రహ్మోద్భవం విద్ధి బ్రహ్మాక్షరసముద్భవమ్ ।
తస్మాత్సర్వగతం బ్రహ్మ నిత్యం యజ్ఞే ప్రతిష్ఠితమ్ ॥
ఏవం ప్రవర్తితం చక్రం నానువర్తయతీహ యః ।

(Ch. III-14 to 16).

The law of the Universe is described by this wheel or circle. All life is sustained by food; food is the result of rain; rain is the result of sacrifice; sacrifice is the result of acts; acts proceed from body; and body is sustained by soul. (To this may be added that the soul or Jiva is sustained by God). Thus works the law of God. To reverse it God causes the combination or conjunction of soul with *prakriti* or body. Soul through body works and with the earnings of work or labour sacrifice is possible; sacrifice in the higher sense pleases Gods who are also fellow - Jivas. Rain is a contribution in return; therefore food – the sustainer of all living objects – is produced. He who violates the law of sacrifice is a sinner. We know in a limited sphere how no society can exist without mutual help and sacrifice of the individuals constituting the society. To cite a passage from Dr. Miller's convocation address :—

"Service and subordination are the life of the Universe ; isolation and selfishness its death."

This duty of living an altruistic life cannot be more effectively expressed than in the words

యజ్ఞశిష్టాశిన స్సన్తో ముచ్యన్తే సర్వకిల్బిషైః ।
భుఞ్జతే తే త్వఘం పాపాయే పచన్త్యాత్మకారణాత్ ॥
(Ch. III-13)

He who eats the remnant of food after offering to others is freed from sins. He who cooks his food for filling his own stomach eats sin and not food. This is elaborately explained in Vishnu Purana when dealing with the duties of a *grihastha*. This is illustrative and not exhaustive. It does not mean that if you give food to your

guests and others in needy circumstances and then take your food you have done all the sacrifices expected of you. In every possible manner one ought to be rendering service to others. It ought to be as one would say a life of self-sacrifice that every one must need and it is he that destroys his sins and gets freedom from karma and bondage. From Brahma down to the lowest creature it is an unbroken chain of Jivas in bondage. Brahma-Yagnya, Deva-Yagnya, Rishi-Yagnya and Pitri-Yagnya that are enjoyed on us are all methods by which we are made to realise the connection between men on earth and those on planes higher than earth and yet both are in a state of bondage — Badha Jivas. Through our religious acts towards them they respond and thus the mutuality of service between the seen and the unseen is quite as real and as effective as that which subsists between man and man in the visible sphere of the Universe. That explains the connection between Yagnyas and rain in the passage cited above, "యజ్ఞాద్భవతి పర్జన్యః".

A *Gnani* who enjoys the fellowship of the Jiva with the Paramatman in the body and who has been able to shut himself off from the external operations of the senses may think that he is above all karmas and to disabuse him of this notion Bhagavan cites his own example.

న మే పార్థాస్తి కర్తవ్యం త్రిషు లోకేషు కిఞ్చన ।
నానవాప్తమవాప్తవ్యం వర్త ఏవ చ కర్మణి ॥ (Ch. III-22)

I have no need to work ; I have nothing to gain in any world ; I have no bondage to be freed from ; I have no sins to be washed away: and yet I am unceasingly acting. Bhagavan then adduces an argument

based on practical policy to convince the *Gnani* that he too ought to perform *karmas.* He must set an example to the rest of men or to those who may not be *Gnanis* like himself and yet who may by following his example of giving up *karma* may be ruined. What is done by good and pious men will serve an example to others.

లోకసఙ్గ్రహమేవాపి సంపశ్యన్ కర్తుమర్హసి ।
యద్యదాచరతి శ్రేష్ఠస్తత్తదేవేతరో జనః
స యత్ప్రమాణం కురుతే లోకస్తదనువర్తతే । (Ch. III-21)

Setting a good example to others is itself an act of service and therefore a duty cast even on the *Gnani.* Self-sufficiency is a karma that will promote bondage as it is sacrifice and altruism that can break the chains of the soul. Therefore the *Gnani* too cannot consider it an act of condescension on his part to perform karmas and an act of obligation for the benefit of others. It is duty. *Gnani* or no *Gnani* as long as the Jiva is encaged in a body *karma* or action of some kind is inevitable. It is in the spirit of the doing that the *Gnani* differs from the *Agnani.* The *Gnani* does every act without an eye on the fruit; he does every act in the name of God ; he feels that when performing an act it is God that does it and towards God it is done. If one performs an act of charity to another the donor must feel that he is giving to God and the donee must feel that it is god that gives. This kind of merger of *karma* in knowledge or *Gnana* takes off every stain from karma or action. Thus it is clear that no one should ever be lazy. He must use his best energies physical and intellectual in the performance of duties that will serve others.

In the performance of duties Gita draws prominence to *Svadharma,* one's own appropriate duty. Duty

is said to be appropriate when it is done in accordance with what is laid down for the particular *varna* and *asrama* to which one belongs. In this connection it is well to remember that Gita contemplates four *varnas* or classes.

Says Bhagavan

చాతుర్వర్ణ్యం మయా సృష్టం గుణకర్మవిభాగశః ।

(Ch. IV-13)

By whatever name classes may be known in different parts of the earth there is no doubt that everywhere men are divided into classes and if carefully analysed the classes are reducible to four broad divisions. The basic principles on which each of the four divisions is formed are *guna* (quality) and action or *karma*. There are three *gunas* or qualities called *sattric*, *rajasic* and *tamasic*. But in the reality of existence Prakriti to which the qualities are attached and to which actions relate is never formed with one of the three qualities to the exclusion of the rest. The three qualities are there and it is the operator the Jiva that has to develop the quality which in its turn regulates the actions. If the *sattvic* quality is developed the actions that follow are of the good sattvic type. So that *guna* and *karma* though they are distinct from each other go hand in hand with each other. Thus according to *guna* and *karma* the Jiva finds its class position as long as he is in a Badha state. It is needless to probe into the question what are the four classes or *varnas* referred to. No doubt the particular stanza referred to by me speaks of four classes in general terms. There are other passages in the Gita which refer to the four classes among Hindus viz., Brahmana,

Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra. But I think there must be a purpose in stating the four divisions in mere general terms without using any nomenclature. As they are the words of *Bhagavan*, the statement must be one of universal application and not one that can refer only to the Hindus. The reference to four Hindu castes is totally separated from the general statement. The stanza that makes the general statement is No. 13 of the IV chapter whereas reference to the four Hindu castes occurs only in the eighteenth chapter. So the reference in the 18th chapter must be taken only as illustrative of the general truth, the illustration being drawn from one community viz., the Hindu community with which the primary readers of Gita will be familiar. But everywhere as I said people are divisible into four broad classes or *Varnas*. The ministers, priests, professors, philosophers etc., come under one class. Their character and their actions are of one type. The protective class is the military class. The producers and distributors are the mercantile and industrial class while we have the fourth class labourers who are useful to every one of three classes in their respective avocations. Each class develops one kind of *guna*. The first class develops *sattvic* quality, the second the *Rajasic*, the third an admixture of all the three *gunas* while the fourth has only the *tamasic* quality. Now the Gita teaches that one should do actions appropriate to the particular class under which he comes. Thus a sort of discipline has to be practised by every one. Gita assures that he who performs his *Svadharma* is entitled to the highest merit to whatever class he may belong. This kind of discipline is absolutely essential. In each body there are four *Varnas*. The head, the shoulders, the trunk and the feet. Do you not thus find the

intellegentia class, the military, the productive and the labouring class in these four parts of the body. By nature they will peform their respective functions. Head will not serve walking nor will the feet solve a mathematical problem. The head with the brain does the Brahmanical functions. The arms do the Kshatriya work. They are the protectors or defenders. The trunk composed of the heart, the lungs, the stomach, liver, kidneys, intestines etc., form the Vaisya or the productive and distributive class. They are the importers, exporters, producers, suppliers, and distributors. The legs or feet do the needed service to the body. Thus is each body a symbol of the Universal truth. Body individual is an image of of body social; body social is an image of body politic; body politic is an image of body universal: and body universal is an image of *God*. So by a long jump we often speak of man as made in the image of *God*. The law of *Svadharma* is universal law, the law on which the whole Universe works. Planets, elements, animals, plants etc., all follow the law of *Svadharma*. Revolt against the law comes only in man and on him the discipline of *Svadharma* is sought to be impressed by Gita.

Reference to duty based on *svadharma* will not be complete by a mere reference to *varna* Dharma. *Varnasrama* Dharma means Dharma or duty pertaining to *Varna* and *Asrama* combined. Varna and Asrama are different. Varna is the initial class and Asrama is the individual stage in the class. E.g.,

Brahmacharin.	Paramahamsa.
Grihastha.	Kutichaka.
Vanaprastha.	Bahudaka.
Sanyasin.	Hamsa.

There are certain duties pertaining to each stage. So the Svadharma is a duty imposed in relation to the class and stage as well.

There is a fifth class spoken of in the Gita. It is not the much depressed or oppressed Panchama class but the fifth class of the Gita is one of *Gunatita*, one who transcends all Gunas including the Sattvic. The test of a *gunatita* is laid down as follows :—

ప్రకాశం చ ప్రవృత్తిం చ మోహమేవ చ పాణ్డవ ।
న ద్వేష్టి సంప్రవృత్తాని న నివృత్తాని కాఙ్క్షతి ॥

One who does not dislike the effects of *Sattvic*, *Rajasic* and *Tamasic* qualities ; One who does not desire to revert to agreeable things enjoyed and given up.

ఉదాసీనవదాసీనో గుణైర్యో న విచాల్యతే ।
గుణా వర్తన్త ఇత్యేవ యోఽవతిష్ఠతి నేఙ్గతే ॥

One who intends on the self-realization looks upon with indifference the proclivities of the gunas and does not follow such tendencies of gunas.

సమదుఃఖసుఖః స్వస్థస్సమలోష్టాశ్మకాఞ్చనః ।
తుల్యప్రియాప్రియో ధీరః తుల్యనిన్దాత్మసంస్తుతిః ॥

One who is not affected by sorrow or pleasures, one who makes no difference between a stone, mud and gold, one who is alike towards likes and dislikes, one who is indifferent to praise or censure ;

మానాపమానయోస్తుల్యస్తుల్యో మిత్రారిపక్షయోః ।
సర్వారమ్భపరిత్యాగీ గుణాతీతస్స ఉచ్యతే ॥

One who does not care for repute or disrepute consequent on praise or censure, one who is alike to friend and foe, one who gets detached from things commenced in life is a *Gunatita*.

This stage will certainly be reached by the disciplined performance of *Svadharma* as directed in Gita.

Thus we find that a disciplined life and course of action are strongly urged by Gita.

Gita lays great stress on *universal tolerance and universal love.*

There are ever so many religious faiths practised by various sections of humanity. No one who follows one faith ought to deride one who follows another faith as a fool or as a ruined man or a sinner. In fact every religion is based on revelation and God chose his own messengers — all for the benefit of the world. Be the messengers an Avatar, or a son of God or a Prophet — all are messengers of God; all revelations are divine revelations and all divine revelations are for mankind as a whole. So Bhagavad Gita warns against any intolerance and assures that in every form chosen for worship He is present. Among Hindus themselves there are worshippers of Sun (Suryanamaskara), Varuna-Japa Navagraha-Japa, Gods and Goddesses of various denominations. To all these Hindus and non-Hindus alike Gita teaches the lesson of tolerance

యే యథా మాం ప్రపద్యన్తే తాంస్తథైవ భజామ్యహమ్ ।
మమ వర్త్మానువర్తన్తే మనుష్యాః పార్థ సర్వశః ।

Whatever may be the idea or form in which a devotee thinks of Me, I appear to him in that form and he will have the benefits of worshipping Me in that form.

యో యో యాం యాం తనుం భక్తః శ్రద్ధయార్చితుమిచ్ఛతి ।
తస్య తస్యాచలాం శ్రద్ధాం తామేవ విదధామ్యహమ్ ।

Whoever may desire to worship me in the shape of some deity whom he chooses with earnestness and sincerity will have his satisfaction from Me acting through these forms which the devotee chooses.

These and other passages in the Gita show that forms make no difference. Faith and earnestness are the essentials. Thus no form of worship can be condemned by another who has his faith in some form which his religion prescribes. The absolute tolerance is taught in Gita and that probably accounts for the fact there is no system of proselytisation adopted by the Hindus to bring others into their fold.

Universal tolerance cannot stand firm unless there is universal love also. Gita lays great stress on this aspect. For this purpose Gita spares nothing to impress the equality of every object in the universe. The soul in every body is alike in essence; every body is but a special shape of the one Prakriti. Both soul and Prakriti come out of God and rest on God. There may be different forms in the universe embodying the soul but they all form one chain held up by God.

మయి సర్వమిదం ప్రోతం సూత్రే మణిగణా ఇవ ।

I am the string passing through and holding up the Universe as beads. The lesson of equality cannot be made more impressive than by this stanza.

విద్యావినయసంపన్నే బ్రాహ్మణే గవి హస్తిని ।
శుని చైవ శ్వపాకే చ పండితాః సమదర్శినః ॥

A really learned man will consider as equal one rich in learning and humility alike, an ordinary Brahmin, a cow or an elephant, a dog or a man who eats dogs. These are samples of contrast taken. The idea is that no factor in the universe should be considered as superior to any other factor. Everything in the universe is working

out its salvation, its freedom from bondage. There may be seeming differences — some may be A class prisoners, some B class, some C class and so on judged by their position and circumstances. But all are prisoners all the same. The C class prisoner may be released from jail even earlier than an A class prisoner. The goal of every prisoner is to get freedom. The goal of every soul in bondage is the attainment of *Mukti* from which there is no return to bondage. The goal can be reached only by those who follow the lessons of Gita. He who sees differences, he who is obsessed with ideas of superiority and inferiority will not get that freedom from bondage.

Gita teaches very forcibly the need for humility. One must realise that he is the most negligible speck in the Universe. What I consider as the most effective teaching on this point is the silent or implied lesson conveyed by *Visvarupa darsana.* After teaching the necessary truths to Arjuna, a desire was created in Arjuna to see at one view the entire Universe as the manifestation of God in other words the *Visvarupa of God.* We are told that God gave Arjuna a special vision to see that Visvarupa, a form which even sages cannot see with their vision. With a special vision Arjuna had the privilege of seeing the Visvarupa of God. Those who read carefully the account of Visvarupa as given by the seer — Arjuna himself, must be struck with one important fact. Arjuna sees a great many things in that form and narrates them in all detail. He sees even his opponents on the battle-field, yet he does not see himself or his brothers, the Pandavas in the Visvarupa. Arjuna must have been thinking very high of himself and his

brothers as the most prominent among men, as those who had the unique friendship of Bhagavan Sri Krishna, as the greatest of warriors and so on, yet they became the most insignificant, the most negligible factors in the universe. They have become totally eclipsed as it were even by objects which Arjuna must have considered far inferior to himself. What more was necessary to teach Arjuna that he is after all nothing in the universe?

అమానిత్వ మదమ్భిత్వమహింసా క్షాన్తిరార్జవమ్ ।

Here are the essential qualities :—

There should be no conceit which makes one disregard even persons better than himself in every respect; there should be no vanity or desire for fame in doing acts of charity or other acts; Absolute non-violence in thought, word or deed when he is offended by others he must receive it with perfect equanimity; one must act with perfect sincerity towards others.

Over the top of these must be placed that one point on which the Gitacharya harps unceasingly. That goes to the root itself, *viz.*, desire for fruit accompanying every action. So long as that desire for fruit seizes a man in his actions, there will be no possibility of reaching any of the ideals referred to already. Duty for the sake of duty with no eye on the fruit is the central idea in Gita and so Mahatmaji rightly calls Gita as a treatise on *Nishkama Yoga* or *Anasaktiyoga*.

LECTURE II.

I must say at the very outset that Gita will appeal to those who have faith in it as a revelation made by God for the benefit of mankind. Whether Gita proceeded directly from Bhagavan Sri Krishna to Arjuna or not, it is certain that it proceeded from the pen of Vyasa Bhagavan as words of Bhagavan. To those who may speak with levity about Avatar or Archa (or image worship) about worlds beyond the known one and life after death, Gita gives the best exposition on all these points. But to those who will not recognise even God or recognising one will still consider devotion to God to be a piece of slavery Gita may do no good. We must proceed on the basis of God, Soul and Prakriti and on the basis that Gita is the voice of God intended for the benefit of the soul in bondage and on that bassis we proceed to see what light Gita throws on the path of the soul for an upward march.

On the last occasion we closed with a statement that Gita can be correctly styled as an exposition of Nishkama-Yoga or Anasakti Yoga. Let us now see what Nishkama Yoga means in the light of the teaching of Gita.

However much we may condemn the evil ways of mankind, there they are, and are bound to be. Souls when they are bound in a body composed of senses, mind, gunas &c., acquired as a result of innumerable births and Karmas in those births are bound by the limitations imposed on them. They have to struggle against the physical influences and get freedom. In spite of all such limitations, all such physical or Prakritic pressure, the

soul has its free will and the consequent responsibility for actions or Karmas. God does not assume the responsibility for the actions or Karmas of man. A father may give to each of his sons a knife and a mango to be cut and eaten .with the knife. One son may make a proper use and father will be pleased with him ; one son may cut his fingers with it and father will be sorry ; another son may cut his own throat with it. Another may cut another man's throat. So the same senses and mind may be made proper use of or may be improperly used. The proper use leads to Mukti and the improper use will lead to further bondage. It is that proper use that forms the theme of Gita. The goal of every Jivan is Mukti — freedom from bondage, attainment of fellowship with God in the *Nitya Vibhuti.* That can be achieved only by devotion. Devotion is not a market commodity. It is what can be achieved through proper karmas, knowledge and renunciation.

The great Sage Alavandar summarises the entire Gita in one stanza.

స్వధర్మజ్ఞాన వైరాగ్యసాధ్య భక్త్యేకగోచరః ।
నారాయణః పరంబ్రహ్మ గీతాశాస్త్రే సమీరితః ॥

Narayana the *Paramatman* can be attained only by devotion which is possible only to one who has been performing his Swadharma or Varnasrama Dharma who has attained knowledge and who has been able to renounce all desires except of course the mukti or freedom. Knowledge here is the knowledge relating to Chit, Achit and Eswara–soul, matter, and God, and their interrelationship. These are clearly explained in the Gita,

Then with this knowledge, one's actions or duties or karmas have to be regulated. How to regulate one's karmas in proper channel is shown in Gita. Then Viragya or renunciation of desires is explained in the Gita. Then how after securing these equipments the Jivan should get at true devotion to God is also explained. There are not only theories or precepts but also practical methods given in the Gita. Thus both the science and art of life are the themes of Gita.

Bhagavan explains his own manifestation in the following stanzas. The topic is beautifully introduced. Bhagavan tells Arjuna

ఇమం వివస్వతే యోగం ప్రోక్తవానహమవ్యయం ।
వివస్వాన్ మనవే ప్రాహ మనురిక్ష్వాకవేఽబ్రవీత్ ॥

"This Karma Yoga which I have been explaining to you till now is what I once explained to Vivaswan (The Sun). He transmitted that knowledge to Vaiwaswata Manu. Manu communicated to Ikshwaku". This is an eternal law - good for all times. Viwaswan and Manu are among the chief executive Officers of the Universe and they were therefore initiated on the eternal laws of God.

This Yoga was in practice for a time.

ఏవం పరంపరాప్రాప్తమిమం రాజర్షయో విదుః ।
స కాలేనేహ మహతా యోగో నష్టః పరంతప ॥

This successively acquired Yoga was practised by Raja-Rishis. But after the lapse of time, it has been

forgotten and lost. Thus though there may be revela tions of truth they are lost and thus there is need for resuscitation through proper channels.

స ఏవాయం మయా తే౽ద్య యోగః ప్రోక్తః పురాతనః ।
భక్తో౽సి మే సఖా చేతి రహస్యం హ్యేతదుత్తమం ॥

As you are my friend and Bhaktha, I am relating to you these ancient doctrines. It may be asked why reference is made in these passages to Ikshwaku and Raja Rishis alone and not to the Brahmarishis and others also, as they are laws to be observed by the whole mankind. The answer is plain. Bhagavan is addressing a Kshatriya in Arjuna and what will appeal to him is the citation of precedents from the earlier Kshatriyas themselves.

Then why is it that Bhagavan puts his readiness to explain the Yoga to Arjuna on two grounds (1) you are my friend (2) you are my Bhaktha. Is not every Jivan a friend and Bhaktha or is it not the duty or Swadharma of Bhagavan to explain truths to every Jiwan, be he a friend and Bhaktha or not? Surely Bhagavan has the same interest in every Jiwan. But the seed of knowledge like any other seed requires some fertility of soil. The fertility required in this case consists in a sincere desire and faith. Arjuna has been treating Krishna as a friend throughout and on the occasion Arjuna while drowned in peflexity appealed to Krishna, as a disciple appeals to a Guru. This frame of mind of Arjuna gave the requisite fertility. You remember the appeal of Arjuna.

కార్పణ్యదోషోపహతః స్వభావః ।
పృచ్ఛామి త్వాంధర్మసమ్మూఢచేతాః ।

యచ్ఛ్రేయః స్యాన్నిశ్చితం బ్రూహి తన్మే ।
శిష్యస్తేఽహం శాధి మాం త్వాం ప్రపన్నమ్ ॥

Arjuna makes thus a clean confession of his depression and confusion and appeals to Sri Krishna.

"I am at your feet; I am your disciple. Please tell me what is best for me to do under the present circumstances".

Here is a true *prapanna* and so Bhagavan finds in Arjuna the best mediary through whom the message of Gita may be transmitted to the world — the world which lost the treasure which once existed.

It is because of the prevalence of wickedness in the world, sages in all climes often arise through whom Bhagavan gives the message of Dharma to mankind. Such wickedness prevails not only among mankind on earth but also among the Devatas in the higher worlds of the universe. There also Rishis like Narada are deputed to discharge the function of rectifiers. Such acts of Grace on the part of the Almighty are innumerable and for the very same purpose Bhagavan Himself takes Avatars and in those Avatars Bhagavan acts like all men, passes through baby-hood, infancy, adult age etc., like all other men and even passes away like ordinary man and by thus moving among men as a man like the rest establishes Dharma. In thus establishing Dharma the eternal laws of God are promulgated through the best mediary. So was Arjuna chosen on this occasion and even in the case of Arjuna the peculiar time when his frame of mind devoid of conceit about his warriorship

was in a fit condition to receive the message was the time chosen. The receptivity of mind is an essential factor always. One in the exhuberence of luxury is not likely to receive sermons on devotion. A man who is in mourning, will not be inclined to hear musical entertainment. Fasts are prescribed for holy days like Sri Rama Navami, Gokulashtami, Siva Rathri and so on to keep a mind solemn enough to devotional purpose. Formalities of Upadesam, Gurudhyanam etc., prescribed in the Gurukula Asramams are not mere empty formalities. Therefore Sri Krishna gives prominence to the two grounds viz., friendly feeling and sincerity of devotion in choosing Arjuna as the mediary. Sri Krishna could not claim these on the part of Duryodhana or Kamsa.

Now it must be remembered also that Arjuna for the time being was not conscious of the fact that he was speaking to Bhagavan Himself in the form of Sri Krishna. Arjuna was only thinking that he was speaking to his friend Krishna and Sri Krishna reciprocates in the same terms. So Arjuna became bewildered when his friend and charioteer referred to the ancient history of teaching Yoga to Vivaswan. So he frankly expresses his surprise.

అపరం భవతో జన్మ పరం జన్మ వివస్వతః ।
కథమేతద్విజానీయాం త్వమాదౌ ప్రోక్తవానితి ॥

(Ch. IV-4.)

What is this Krishna? You are born now and you are my contemporary Vivaswan was born long prior to you. How am I to take your statement that you preached all this Yoga to Vivaswan? So Bhagavan gives out all about Himself.

1st Step

బహూని మే వ్యతీతాని జన్మాని తవ చార్జున ।
తాన్యహం వేద సర్వాణి న త్వం వేత్థ పరంతప ॥

(Ch. IV-5.)

I have taken innumerable births like yourself, O! Arjuna ! I know every one of them but you do not know any of them. That is the difference between yourself and myself. Thus says Bhagavan. Here Bhagavan compares his births with the births of Arjuna in point of number. If avatars of Bhagavan are taken as his births even then all the Avatars recorded so far will not go above thirty or forty, while the births of Arjuna from the beginning of Kalpa up to his age must be numbered by millions. How then can the births of the two be placed on one level for comparison. Of course in either case the case of Bhagavan's births or Jivan's births birth is only a manifestation in the Universe. Now what about the number. Bhagavan here refers to his Antaryamitwam. In every man there is the conjunction of Chit, Achit and Eswara. So the stanza means.

" O, Arjuna! every time you took a birth in somebody, I also came in as Antaryami. Antaryamitwam is a manifestation of Myself and therefore I call it my Janma. That has been done as often as you came in body ". The difference is that you do not know even your immediately preceding birth, perhaps not even what you did in the earlier stages of this very birth. But I know every one of your births and my having been with you all along.

2nd Step :–This was not a special privilege shown to Arjuna alone. God is omnipenetrative — He is Antar-

yamin in every object in the Universe. So says Bhagavan.

అజోఽపి స న్నవ్యయాత్మా భూతానామీశ్వరోఽపి సన్ ।
ప్రకృతిం స్వామధిష్ఠాయ సంభవామ్యాత్మమాయయా ॥
(Ch. IV-6.)

I am not subject to births and deaths. I am the Lord of the Universe. Without giving up my own prakriti, I enter into everything by my will.

3rd Step :—Bhagavan may be omnipenetrative, may be Sarvantaryami. But in that state the Jivan rarely perceives his companion or co-tenant in the same body. It is left only to the Gnani to perceive. But the world goes headlong often with wickedness — Laws of God are not followed. So it becomes necessary for Bhagavan to appear outside also and so avatars are taken for the establishment of Dharma. So says Bhagavan :—

యదా యదా హి ధర్మస్య గ్లానిర్భవతి భారత ।
అభ్యుత్థానమధర్మస్య తదా త్మానం సృజామ్యహమ్ ॥
(Ch. IV-7.)

Whenever Dharma goes down and Adharma gets the upper hand, I come down with my *Shudda Satvam* for the purification of the world. When the Satvic quality is suppressed by the Rajasic and Tamasic gunas among men Dharma goes down. So Bhagavan brings to bear on the Universe the pure unalloyed Satva Gunam.

4th Step :—Sometimes it becomes necessary to remove the wicked elements altogether by a process of

destruction. Act of destruction is an exhibition of Rajasic quality. Violence has to be employed. But it is no violence when it proceeds from Bhagavan for the good of the universe. It is a piece of amputation – a surgical operation. So says Bhagavan :—

> పరిత్రాణాయ సాధూనాం వినాశాయ చ దుష్కృతామ్ ।
> ధర్మసంస్థాపనార్థాయ సంభవామి యుగే యుగే ॥

(Ch. IV-8.)

It must not be understood that Bhagavan while exhibiting the three gunas is affected by those gunas. He is above all gunas. Only his exhibition is only a demonstration of how the gunas operate.

5th Step:—As Antaryamin He is unperceptible except to a *Gnani*. As Avatar he is available only to the contemporaries. But what about those who have neither of these advantages. To them Bhavagan says:—

> యే యథా మాం ప్రపద్యన్తే తాంస్తథైవ భజామ్యహమ్ ।
> మమ వర్త్మానువర్తన్తే మనుష్యాః పార్థ సర్వశః ॥

(Ch. IV-11.)

In whatever shape or form a sincere devotee desires to worship me, I give him that enjoyment.

True sincere devotion is essential. Bhagavan became a son, a brother, a husband, a friend, a servant and so on to his Bhaktas. He comes in any stone, or mud, or wood, or metal, for the worship of his devotee. This is the Archa form.

In these words Bhagavan explains how his initial *paratwam* is manifested in various shapes for the benefit of mankind. Then what about the Chit and the Achit. The physical body is a contribution of the Achit and the Jivan is a contribution of the Chit. About these Bhagavan says that the one is from His lower Prakriti and the other from the higher Prakriti. The lower Prakriti when put into operation in the manifested universe takes eight main forms viz., the five elements, the mind, the Budhi and Ahamkara. The mind represents its group of five sources; The Ahamkara represents the three gunas — Satvan Rajasam and Tamasam. These by their own varying combinations supply the bodies of every object in the universe.

భూమిరాపోఽనలో వాయుః ఖం మనో బుద్ధిరేవ చ ।
అహఙ్కార ఇతీయం మే భిన్నా ప్రకృతిరష్టధా ॥
అపరేయమితస్త్వన్యాం ప్రకృతిం విద్ధి మే పరామ్ ।
జీవభూతాం మహాబాహో యయేదం ధార్యతే జగత్ ॥

(Ch. VII-4, 5.)

There is higher Prakriti of mine which is of the sentient type. It is superior to the Achit. It is the Chit. It is through the Chit entering into the Achit the whole universe is sustained.

But this does not mean that every body of every man is made for him by God. It is the Law of Karma that works it out. Every man's birth is determined by his own previous Karmas and Gunas. Therefore the evolution or elevation of the soul depends on his own Karmas and Gunas. To this extent there is the free will in man. It is for him to regulate his actions, to

control his senses, to cultivate his quality and thus to rise higher and higher until he gets his absolute freedom from bondage. So says Bhagavan.

న మాం కర్మాణి లిమ్పన్తి న మే కర్మఫలే స్పృహా ।
ఇతి మాం యోఽభిజానాతి కర్మభిర్న స బధ్యతే ॥

(Ch. V-14.)

These different forms of the creation are not mine nor am I concerned with the different Karmas. He who knows this and acts accordingly will not be bound by Karmas. That is, if one knows that he is responsible for his births, will know how he can escape by his own exertions the chains of Karma. If I am bad, I cannot say that God made me bad; If I am poor or miserable, I cannot say that God made me poor or miserable. If I labour under any such misapprehension that for every-thing God is responsible I will never get my relief. If I know that I am what I am, because my previous Karmas have made me so, and my present Karmas are making me so, then I will try to improve my condition by better actions and cultivation of better character. This individual responsibility should never be ignored. We ought not to throw all our mis-deeds and misfortunes alike on the broad shoulders of God and sleep over our own duties and responsibilities. This individual responsibility is the greatest factor in the Law of Karma.

Now with this knowledge of Himself, His body and Eswara and with this sense of responsibility for his acts what course should a man pursue to reach the destination? Reaching this step itself is being difficult

and very rare. Even Bhagavan deplores over the condition of the Jivans in bondage.

బహూనాం జన్మనామన్తే జ్ఞానవాన్మాం ప్రపద్యతే ।
వాసుదేవః సర్వమితి స మహాత్మా సుదుర్లభః ॥

(Ch. VII-19.)

After numerous births one knows and looks to me that I am the goal and everything. Such a Mahatma is very rare. But having got at the knowledge that man is not the physical body but the Jivan in it and that the body is but a vehicle through which he has to get rid of his chains, that his goal is fellow-ship with God in the Sudda Satvic sphere free from any bondage the knowledge has to be followed up in practice. That is still more difficult. In fact if it is not so followed up by every effort his knowledge is a greater danger for him than even ignorance. His fall will be a fall from a greater height and will cause greater injury than the fall of an ignorant man.

Then this book knowledge is of no use. It is one thing to speak of the Chit and another thing to realise it. We may quote stanzas from Gita ; we may recite the Upanishads by heart. The realization is the essential thing. Methods of realization are also explained in the Gita. It does not stop with mere theories.

To begin with, every man must perform his duties. He can never be without doing Karma of some kind or other. As long as he is in a body performance of Karma is inevitable ; None can say that he is not doing any Karma and therefore free from Karma. Even if he were to sit quiet without doing any action his mind is acting

and proceeding in different directions. While doing a Karma he must do it in such a manner that his doing will be equivalent to non-doing. This will be the case if one does every act without the least desire for its fruit. He must do his duty. In the fruit of it, he must have no concern. Success and failure must be equal to him.

యదృచ్ఛాలాభసంతుష్టో ద్వంద్వాతీతో విమత్సరః ।
సమసిద్ధావసిద్ధౌ చ కృత్వాపి న నిబధ్యతే ।

(Ch. IV-22.)

One who is pleased to be content with what comes to him of its own accord, one who looks upon pleasure and sorrow with equilibrium of mind, one who does not get annoyed with other for his own disappointments, one who looks upon success and defeat with equal indifference is not bound by any Karma which he may be performing.

This is a difficult frame of mind to get. Why should evil ways be easier than the good ways. It is the effect of the law of gravitation in the field of karma. By successive births and Karmas done through the help of the physical body and senses without the equipment of true knowledge and submitting to the natural temptations of the senses and the Gunas, diversion has become a difficult process. Every item of the physical body is a double edged knife.

When and how these souls got into this muddle one cannot say. Sages themselves merely answer it by a return question which preceded which — tree or the seed (Beejankura Nyaya). Let us for our satisfaction think of an analogy.

A father chooses one fine morning to take all his sons to a lake. There he ties ropes round each son's waist. He holds the other ends in his hand and throws all the sons into the lake to struggle for themselves and come back to the shore by successful swimming. If one is about to be drowned to death he gives just the lift enough with the rope to prevent the death but leaves him again to struggle for himself.

Similarly God with his two Prakritis lower and higher (already referred to) makes the manifestation or the Srishti of the Universe and leaves there to struggle and swim to the shore successfully. I am tempted to draw this analogy by reason of some words used in philosophical parlance. The universe is called Samsara. Samsara is compared to Sagara and the struggle of the souls in the manifested universe as Lila Vibhuti of God as distinguished from the Nitya Vibhuti of Sri Vaikuntam.

Any way the Jivas got into the deep sea of Samsara and they must get out of it. They must get a detachment from their environment and seek the way up

1. The first advice of Gita is "Let every man perform the duties prescribed or ordained for him. One ought not to give up or neglect his own duties and go in for another's duties — duties allotted to a different class of people. That is why it is called Swadharma and not Swakarma. Karma is an ordinary term for action but Dharma signifies an action as prescribed or ordained by Shastras in harmony with the Law of God.

శ్రేయాన్ స్వధర్మో విగుణః పరధర్మాత్స్వనుష్ఠితాత్ ।
స్వధర్మే నిధనం శ్రేయః పరధర్మో భయావహః ॥

(Ch. III–35.)

One's own Dharma even if done somewhat imperfectly is safer than adopting another's Dharma and failing there.

Some commentators think of a contrast here between Karma Yoga and Gnana Yoga. It is again repeatedly pointed out that in all actions there must be no desire for fruit. Everything must be done as "కృష్ణార్పణమస్తు" and with the feeling that what one does is caused to be done by him by Bhagavan and for Bhagavan's own Kainkaryam or in the service of God. Will this be available to an evil doer? Can a man do evil acts and say that they are caused to be done by Bhagavan Himself? The simple answer is that he who does any act in the name of God, with the consciousness that he is serving God thereby will never do an evil act. His acts will always be good.

Therefore says Bhagavan.

మయి సర్వాణి కర్మాణి సన్న్యస్యాధ్యాత్మచేతసా ।
నిరాశీర్నిర్మమో భూత్వా యుధ్యస్వ విగతజ్వరః ॥

(Ch. III–30)

As the Jiva derives its power only from God the Jiva must offer all its acts at the feet of God and give up the Mamata that he is the full author of his acts. If this be the feeling of the Jiva towards God he will have no fear and he can struggle against all evil forces.

"యుధ్యస్వ" is interpreted to mean a direction to Arjuna to enter into the war before him. Addressed to any Jiva through Arjuna it means "Struggle against all evils without fear."

The evils of desire are thus described.

ధ్యాయతో విషయాన్ పుంసస్సఙ్గస్తేషూపజాయతే ।
సఙ్గాత్సఞ్జాయతే కామః కామాత్క్రోధోఽభిజాయతే ॥
క్రోధాద్భవతి సమ్మోహః సమ్మోహాత్స్మృతివిభ్రమః ।
స్మృతిభ్రంశాద్బుద్ధినాశో బుద్ధినాశాత్ప్రణశ్యతి ॥

(Ch. II-62)

Even if the senses are held off from objects of desire the mind will stick to those objects. The desire to get at them may be granted or not. If the desire is not realised, anger arises against all the obstructive forces. A man who is enraged loses his balance of mind and knows not what he may do or may not do. He forgets himself and his previous attempts to divert his senses from outside objects. Then he loses his sense altogether. He is thus ruined.

Thus there will be a complete bar against the realization of self and the Paramatman.

The processes prescribed are.

1. First step the procution of senses from running after outside temptations.

2. If the temptations knock at the doors of the mind shut them out and let not the doors of mind be opened to them.

3. Then let the attention be directed towards the higher self and Paramatman-Antaryami who is always ignored and neglected.

4. Then let the Jivatman enjoy the Paramatman by self-realization,

Thereafter all acts or Karmas will automatically turn into acts of a non-binding nature.

He may see anything and he will not be affected; He may touch anything and he will not be affected.

To give a homely analogy.

1. Let not the mind and eyes run after outside women;

2. Then if with eyes closed the mind thinks and outside temptations force on it, let it be shut out of the mind.

3. Let the mind run on the wife at home.

4. Then let the wife be enjoyed with the best of love.

These four steps are known by the terms.

1. Yatamanam యతమానం.

2. Vyathirekam వ్యతిరేకం.

3. Ekendryam ఏకేన్ద్రియం.

4. Vaseekaram వశీకారం.

All love, all desire, all attachment must be towards the Paramatma. All songs of Sri Vaishnava Saints known as Alvars were all conceived in the form of Nayaki and Nayaka. Alvars put themselves in the position of Nayaki towards God as Nayaka. It so happpened that one of the Saints was a woman-Andal, the daughter of Perialvar. It was easier for her than the male Alwars as she was by nature a Nayaki. Her

father was taking garlands and flowers to God Ranganatha every day. She as true Nayaki was first adorning herself with those flowers and garlands without the knowledge of her father and was replacing them in their original condition for her father to take them to the temple of Ranganatha. When she adorned herself what did she feel "Oh! these flowers and garlands look so nice when I, an ordinary mortal, wear them. How much more beautiful will they be when they adorn my Lord Ranganatha."

One day one piece of hair stuck to the garlands and she did not notice it when replacing them. Her father Perialwar discovering it grew angry on knowing the cause, threw them aside, prepared fresh garlands and took them to the temple. God Ranganatha communing with Perialwar said "These are not my usual garlands. Get me the garlands which Andal wore first and which you therw away to-day or let these be worn by her first before you bring them to me." Here there was a woman who realised Paramatman in her lifetime. As her history goes, she did not marry any man but married Sri Ranganatha. She is worshipped as Goddess in every Vaishnava Temple.

Not to speak of this Sri Vaishnava Saint, daughter of another Saint, there was a Muhammadan princess whose father in his lust of Hindu idols carried away the beautiful idol of Melkota temple. The princess took first a fancy, than took to admiration, took to devotion and took to love as Nayaki and Nayaka between herself and True Narayana, Ramanuja the propounder of Visishtadwaitism went in search of the idol to the Padushah himself and prayed for the return of the idol,

He brought away the idol during the absence of the princess. The princess coming to know of it insisted on her father getting her Lord back to her. Ramanuja and the idol were not traceable by the messengers. Then the princess lay fasting in devotion until her Lord informed her where he was. She ran away there to the Temple in Melkota, disappeared and became one with her Lord. Even to-day you find this Bee Bee Nachar in the shape of an idol at the feet of the Diety in Melkota. There is a temple for this Goddess-Thuluka Nachar in the shrine at Sri Rangam too. Numerous instances may be cited to show how the teachings of Gita bore fruit when applied. The seed of Gita was sown on a fertile soil and the transplantation have also been successful where-ever the soul was fertilised by the very system of fertilisers advised in Gita.

There is in our midst tc-day Mahatma Gandhi, You all call him a man—Do you not? It is all the better for our present purposes—for the demonstration of the teachings of Gita. He has been putting in practice every teaching of Gita. What does he say? speaking on the Mystery of God, he expresses thus.

"I know that I shall never know God if I do not wrestle with and against evil even at the cost of life itself. I am fortified in the belief by my own humble and limited experience. The purer I try to become the nearer to God I feel myself to be. How much more should I be near to him when my faith is not a mere apology as it is to-day but has become as immoveable as the Himalayas and as white as the snows on their peaks?

HERE IS THE GREATEST "SLAVE" OF GITA.

LECTURE III.

We have seen the principles of yoga explained. A few practical hints are now given in the chapter on ఆత్మసంయమయోగము Atma Samyama Yogam.

యోగీ యుఞ్జీత సతతమాత్మానం రహసి స్థితః।
ఏకాకీ యతచిత్తాత్మా నిరాశీరపరిగ్రహః॥

(Ch. VI–10)

One must select a lonely noiseless place. He must keep all his senses under control without any diversion. He must think of his soul and nothing else.

శుచౌ దేశే ప్రతిష్ఠాప్య స్థిరమాసనమాత్మనః।
నాత్యుచ్ఛ్రితం నాతినీచం చేలాజినకుశోత్తరమ్॥
తత్రైకాగ్రం మనః కృత్వా యతచిత్తేన్ద్రియక్రియః।
ఉపవిశ్యాసనే యుఞ్జ్యాద్యోగమాత్మవిశుద్ధయే॥

(Ch. VI–11)

The place selected must be a very clean unpolluted spot. It must be one uncontaminated by impure persons. Impure acts and thought leave their evil effects behind and the atmosphere will be saturated with such evil forces. There ought to be no unclean unholy, undesirable, associations concerning the place. Else the mind will be disturbed. On such a selected spot he must place a strong non-shaky seat. The seat must be neither very high nor very low. On that seat a cloth must be spread; Over that a deer skin and over that again kusa grass must be spread. The idea is that the seat must give comfort and convenience to the sitter during his meditation, Seated firmly on such a seat he

must direct the mind wholly towards the inner self with undivided attention. With senses under absolute control he must begin to realise the self the self must realise itself, must think of its own goal and freedom from bondage.

సమం కాయం శిరో గ్రీవం ధారయన్నచలం స్థిరమ్ ।
సంప్రేక్ష్య నాసికాగ్రం స్వం దిశశ్చానవలోకయన్ ॥
ప్రశాన్తాత్మా విగతభీః బ్రహ్మచారివ్రతే స్థితః ।
మనస్సంయమ్య మచ్చిత్తో యుక్త ఆసీత మత్పరః ॥

(Ch. VI-13)

The head, the neck and the body must be maintained at one level; must be kept firm; He must not look in different directions; He must look at the tip of the nose between the pupils of the eyes; He must have perfect peace of mind; He must be free from any fear, diffidence or depression; He must observe Brahmacharya abstinence; He must bestow his mind solely on the self and Paramatman; the Atman and Paramatman must be in undisturbed communion.

నాత్యశ్నతస్తు యోగోఽస్తి న చైకాంతమనశ్నతః ।
న చాతిస్వప్నశీలస్య జాగ్రతో నైవ చార్జున ॥
యుక్తాహారవిహారస్య యుక్తచేష్టస్య కర్మసు ।
యుక్తస్వప్నావబోధస్య యోగో భవతి దుఃఖహా ॥

(Ch. VI-16)

One who eats too much and one who fasts too much are unfit for this kind of meditation. One who sleeps too much and one who never sleeps are also unfit. In food, sleep and every action there ought to be moderation. Even on the quality of food taken depends the

quality or guna cultivated and naturally the fitness for meditation also.

ఆహారస్త్వపి సర్వస్య త్రివిధో భవతి ప్రియః !

(Ch. XVII-6 & 7)

There are three kinds of food which are agreeable to the three qualities respectively,

ఆయుస్సత్త్వబలారోగ్య సుఖప్రీతి వివర్ధనాః ।
రస్యాః స్నిగ్ధాః స్థిరా హృద్యా ఆహారాస్సాత్త్వికప్రియాః ॥

(Ch. XVII-8)

The Satvic food will prolong life, give vitality, strength, health, happiness and pleasure.

కట్వమ్లలవణాత్యుష్ణ తీక్ష్ణ రూక్షవిదాహినః ।
ఆహారా రాజసస్యేష్టా దుఃఖశోకామయప్రదాః ॥

(Ch. XVII-9)

Bitter, sour, saltish, pungeant, hot, dry, things are Rajasis and lead to sorrow and misery.

యాతయామం గతరసం పూతిపర్యుషితం చ యత్ ।
ఉచ్ఛిష్టమపి చామేధ్యం భోజనం తామసప్రియమ్ ॥

(Ch. XVII-10)

Old food which is a night (three hours) old, food which has lost its natural taste, food which is a remnant of another's leaf, food which is impure and food not previously offered to God are all Tamasic articles of food.

There with these equipments one must begin his Samadhi and secure perfect steadiness of attention.

యథా దీపో నివాతస్థో నేఙ్గతే సోపమా స్మృతా ।
యోగినో యతచిత్తస్య యుఞ్జతో యోగమాత్మనః ॥
(Ch. VI–19)

The steadiness must be like that of a light in a windless place. Thus there must be no disturbing factor to shake the mind.

But says Bhagavan, there are even among such devotees four kinds of persons classified according to their desires, aims and aspirations.

చతుర్విధా భజన్తే మాం జనాస్సుకృతినోఽర్జున ।
ఆర్తో జిజ్ఞాసురర్థార్థీ జ్ఞానీ చ భరతర్షభ ॥

Some people appeal to me for restoration of lost health or wealth etc; some are anxious to get health, wealth and all prosperity; Some will be satisfied with ఆత్మానుభవం–self-enjoyment ; very few desire to have direct fellowship with Paramatman in absolute mukti. Thus there are really three Aiswaryarthi, Kaivalyarthi and Moksharthi.

We see these kinds exemplified in a way among the devotees who go to Tirupati Sri Venkateswara's shrine. Some go to discharge vows made at the recovery of health, wealth etc. Some make further vows in the same direction. There are also those who go for spiritual advancement and make their prapatti for attaining mukti, yet all these are devotees, be the object secular or spiritual.

Thus in the universe when jivas are mixed up with prakriti and gunas there are men who do not and cannot realise the jiva apart fromt he body and whose natural instincts and desires do not prompt them to soar

higher than the secular plane. So while all Bhaktas are dear to God and are helped by Bhagavan in the realization of their desires, gnani who desires the highest bliss of fellow-ship with Bhagavan is the dearest.

When once anything is done with earnestness and sincerity God helps him. He is on the right path to higher things.

Take for instance the devotees to Venkateswara. Archa (idol) is described in the Agamas as Bhoga, Vira and Yoga (and we may ignore the obsolete form called Abhicharika). In the Bhoga aspect a devotee of the Aiswaryarthi ఐశ్వర్యార్థి type approaches Sri Venkateswara with earnestness and sincerity of devotion to get his desires fulfilled. He then applies to the same deity with the same sincerity and intensity of devotion for successes in litigation etc, in Vira aspect. Then finally to get a spiritual advance in himself he appeals to the same deity in the yoga aspect and gets his mukti.

When once a jiva takes the right line, truly though very slowly he will reach the goal. It may be after a number of births that he gets even an awakening. The right line taken in one birth will stand him in good stead in the succeeding birth and the gradually progressing good karmas and gunas will lead to perfection.

So Bhagavan says.

బహూనాం జన్మనామన్తే జ్ఞానవాన్మాం ప్రపద్యతే ।

(Ch. VII-19)

Those who are on the right path to devotion cultivate godly qualities and in succeeding birth also they continue the godly qualities and are born with Daivic

nature. Those who develop perversity take an Asuric nature. Thus among men there are some who are of Daivic nature and some of the Asura type. Their differences are described in Gita.

> అభయం సత్త్వసంశుద్ధిః జ్ఞానయోగవ్యవస్థితిః ।
> దానం దమశ్చ యజ్ఞశ్చ స్వాధ్యాయస్తప ఆర్జవం ॥
> అహింసా సత్యమక్రోధస్త్యాగశ్శాన్తిరపైశునమ్ ।
> దయాభూతేష్వలోలత్వం మార్దవం హ్రీరచాపలమ్ ॥
> తేజః క్షమా ధృతిశ్శౌచమద్రోహో నాతిమానితా ।
> భవన్తి సంపదం దైవీమభిజాతస్య భారత ।

(Ch. XVI–1)

1. అభయం:—One may lose pleasant and agreeable objects and may get unpleasant and disagreeable ones. On neither occasion should one feel sorrow. He must be fearless of what may happen however bad it may be.

2. సత్వ సంశుద్ధిః:—Absolute purity of mind. The mind must not be affected or influenced by Rajasic or Tamasic tendencies. It must be satvic.

3. జ్ఞానయోగవ్యవస్థితిః:—Steadiness on the knowledge of the soul which is necessary for any yogam—karma, gnana or Bhakti.'

4. దానం:—Charity. One must earn money in a righteous way and must use it in helping deserving persons and objects. We are ready to subscribe money for tea parties, receptions and entertainments, and if a deserving blind or helpless beggar knocks at the door for morsel of food drive him out with abuses and perhaps assaults. It is needless to expand on our methods of

charity. True form of charity lies in helping truly deserving persons and it is not difficult to find out who is the deserving recipient and who is not. Yet we never make any such discrimination perhaps because we make no discrimination in the mode of acquiring money.

5. దమః:—Comfort. Peace of mind without being attached to undesirable objects.

6. యజ్ఞః :—If one wants to perform Yagna he must do it without expectation of fruits and with the sole object of propitiating God. Yagnam in the larger sense of sacrifice means service to others—altruism. Even in the orthodox sense many perform Yagnas for the expenses of which they go round for subscriptions. They perform Yagnas for the reputation of it if not for anything else. He must be known as a Dikshita or Somayaji brizzling with kundalas. Lives of goats are needlessly taken away in these sacrifices. Gita nowhere recognises this form of Yagna. Gnana Yagna is referred to as the best. To those who indulge in such vanity Sri Vedanta Desika says.

"పశువధ పరిశేషాః పండితో నామయజ్ఞాః" Mere sin of killing an animal survives in such nominal Yagnas. It is noticeable that none of the great Acharyas or Alwars ever performed any such Yagnya involving cruelty to animals. Yagna with them meant nothing more than service to mankind, to the Devatas, to the Rishis, to the Pitris etc., all these being deemed as service to God in various forms.

7. స్వాధ్యాయః:—Learning Vedas and all such work as speak of the ways and means of attaining Mukti.

8. తపః:—Penance. Not for earthly benefits but for spiritual advancement.

We hear in the Puranas now several persons performed penances of the severest type for getting gifts (Varas) of strength, prowess etc. Hiranyakasipu, Ravana, Vali etc. They are comdemned by Gita; the Puranas proved their futility.

9. ఆర్జవం:—In dealing with others, one ought to show perfect sincerity in thought, word and deed. Double dealing and trible dealing ought not to be practised.

10. అహింసా :—Doing no harm to others. In its most extended sense, it is this doctrine that has been promulgated by Mahatma Gandhi in his mission on earth.

11. సత్యం:—Truth. Here again Mahatma Gandhi has been expounding the highest tenets of truth. With Mahatmaji *truth* admits of no exceptions. Some are of opinion that in some exceptional cases *truth* may be abdicated. Even following close on Gita we find in Maha-Bharata that Dharma Raja made up his mind to tell Dronacharya the words "అశ్వత్థామాహతః (కుంజరః)" knowing full well the purpose of the statement. Mahatmaji when asked whether to protect a cow chased by a butcher one may give wrong information to the butcher said "No even then one must speak the truth. But to protect the cow he must stand between the butcher and the cow and if in the act of defence he is himself killed there his duty ends. If not he protects the cow by his intervention and not by untruth."

12. అక్రోధః :—Not getting angry even when another does any harm.

13. త్యాగః :—Giving up everything is not conducive to the spiritual advancement.

14. శాన్తిః :—Control of senses and peace of mind.

15. అపైశునం :—Not saying anything that will lead to harm to others.

16. దయా :—universal love and sympathy.

17. అలోలుపత్వం :—Detachment from sensual pleasures.

18. మార్దవం:–Softness, politeness, courtesy, amiability.

19. హ్రీః :—Shyness—feeling shy of doing anything undesirable.

20. అచాపలం :—Not being tempted by anything.

21. తేజః :—Sprightliness and sense of self-respect.

22. క్షమః :—Tolerance and forgiveness.

23. ధృతిః :—Strength of mind even in difficulties.

24. శౌచం :—Purity.

25. అద్రోహః :—Not being treacherous.

26. నాతిమానితా :—Devoid of conceit.

These are the characteristics of godly nature. The Asura Swabhava has also been described in detail and in general the characteristics are opposed to those of Daivic nature. But can mankind be so wholly dividel into two distinct classes ? No. One who possesses everyone of the Daivic characteristics and nothing of

the Asuric is a rare Mahatma. Similarly one who does not possess a single Daivic quality and is full of Asuric qualities is a rare villain. Mixedness is what we ordinarily meet with. The best Devata has defects and the worst Asura has some virtues. Great Rishis were exhibiting anger and passion at times, for instance Galava *vs.* Gandharva; Dhurvasa *vs.* Ambarisha.

What determines the nature is the proportion and preponderance of the characteristics. If in milk sugar and pepper are added you still say that you are drinking "milk." If milk and sugar are added to a decoction of coffee you say you are drinking coffee. The former is Daivic drink and the latter is Asuric. The man of Daivic nature will be pro-God, God-fearing even in the midst of his defects, and the man of Asuric type is Godless.

అసత్యమప్రతిష్ఠం తే జగదాహురనీశ్వరమ్ ।
అపరస్పరసంభూతం కిమన్యత్కామహైతుకమ్ ॥

(Ch. XVI–8)

They say "there is no God governing the Universe, that man is but the result of sexual union. What is there beyond it"?

చిన్తామపరిమేయాం చ ప్రలయాన్తాముపాశ్రితాః ।
కామోప భోగపరమా ఏతావదితి నిశ్చితాః ॥

(Ch. XVI–11)

They think that right up to the end they must go on enjoying their pleasures and realising their desires They consider them to be the be all and end all of their lives.

ఇదమద్య మయా లబ్ధ మిమం ప్రాప్స్యే మనోరథమ్ ।
ఇదమస్తీదమపి మే భవిష్యతి పునర్ధనమ్ ॥

(Ch. XVI–13)

All that I possess property, children etc., were all earned by me. I can realise what I now desire. I can have anything by my own capacity and efforts.

ఈశ్వరోఽహమహం భోగీ సిద్ధోఽహం బలవాన్ సుఖీ ।

I am Eswara ; I enjoy everything ; I am a Siddha ; I am strong and I am happy.

ఆఢ్యోఽభిజనవానస్మి కోఽన్యోఽస్తి సదృశో మయా ।
యక్ష్యే దాస్యామి మోదిష్య ఇత్యజ్ఞానవిమోహితాః ॥

(Ch. XVI–15)

"I am rich in all items of prosperity. I am born in a high family. Who is there equal to me? I can perform Yagnyam as I please. I will do acts of charity as I please. I will have my own satisfaction in these matters." Thus does he think that everything is due to himself without any grace of or place for God. One who feels that he is everything, that there is no God beyond matter, that there is nothing in the universe which need be attributed to any power beyond is of the Asuric type. He may by accident possess some of the Daivic qualities. It is sometimes said that among atheists and materialists there are much better men than some among the theists, and God-ridden people. It may be quite true. But it must not be forgotten that Laws of God are established laws and have been working always. Though one may be an atheist or materialist

he moves in the society in which the laws of God are established and work. It is true also that among theists there are persons whose character and conduct in daily life may not compare favourably with that of an atheist or materialist. In the case of a theist erring he feels the sanction of divine punishment for his misdeeds. Under the influence of his gunas and weak mind he might succumb. Still he repents, feels sorry for his lack of strength and one day he is bound to improve. In the case of an atheist the sanction is only the social one. If he escapes punishment here there his mind is at ease.

So Bhagavan gives this direction.

తస్మాచ్ఛాస్త్రం ప్రమాణం తే కార్యాకార్యవ్యవస్థితౌ ।
జ్ఞాత్వా శాస్త్రవిధానోక్తం కర్మ కర్తుమిహార్హసి ॥

Let Shastras be your guide; Let the Vedas be your light and let your actions be guided by them. "Homo Mensura rerum" Man is the measure of thing is the sophistic doctrine. If each man is a guide and light into himself, if his acts are to be judged by himself and by his own standard he cannot get on even if he should go to the North Pole. That is why Gita is never tired of teaching over and over again that the soul in you is exactly like the soul in another, that your prakriti is just like that in every other object, and that God Antaryami in you is the same as in every other person or object. You live but as a part of the life of the Universe. As in your body you take care of every limb for the weal of the whole body, so you must see that you a mere limb of Universe are kept right for the weal of the Universe.

It is that prakriti that issues from God into the manifestation that develops into twenty-four tatwas in gross forms and supplies everybody. It is the higher prakriti of God that multiplies into the souls that keep up the prakritic forms. It is God antaryami that sustains the conjunction of jiva and prakriti.

ఈశ్వరస్సర్వభూతానాం హృద్దేశేఽర్జున తిష్ఠతి ।
భ్రామయన్ సర్వభూతాని యన్త్రారూఢాని మాయయా ॥

All objects in the Universe which are fitted up in the machinery of body with senses are regulated by Eswara by his Sankalpam; Eswara is in the heart of every object.

It is perhaps tantalising to hear at times about God's regulation and control, at times about the jiva's responsibility for all actions and at times about the prakriti and gunas being the influencing factors.

To reconcile these Bhagavan says.

అధిష్ఠానం తథా కర్తా కరణం చ పృథగ్విధమ్ ।
వివిధా చ పృథక్చేష్టా దైవం చైవాత్ర పఞ్చమమ్ ॥
శరీరవాఙ్మనోభిర్యత్కర్మ ప్రారభతే నరః ।
న్యాయ్యం వా విపరీతం వా పఞ్చైతే తస్య హేతవః ॥

Whatever a man may do by deed, word or thought be it good or bad there are five factors in operation.

1. Body.

2. The Jiva,

3. Senses and mind.

4. Life forces in the system.

5. God.

He calls Himself the fifth factor. His responsibility is confined only to the extent of his being granter of powers to the other factors and sustaining them in conjunction with one another.

It is like this. There is a province under the administration of a Governor.

1. The province is the body.

2. The revenues are life forces.

3. The cabinet are the senses and mind.

4. The Governor is the Jiva.

5. The Sovereign is his Paramatman. As in this the Governor has to take the responsibility so in the body the jiva has all the responsibility.

The responsibility for actions or karmas being therefore the jiva's, it depends on how the jiva controls the senses, cultivates the Gunas and regulates the Karmas. One chief factor, rather the chief factor in the performance of karmas is Tyaga or renunciation or detachment.

Thyagams are three fold (1) Karma Thyagam (2) Kharmaphala Thyagam (3) Karma Karthrithwa Thyagam కర్మకర్తృత్వత్యాగం.

1. Karma-Thyagam does not mean giving up karma altogether, for that is impossible. It is only the detachment that is needed.

2. Phala-Thyagam ఫలత్యాగ means, the results or fruits of the Karma must not be thought of.

3. కర్తృత్వ త్యాగ lies in feeling that he is not the doer, but, God, that gave him the power to do it, that imposes an obligation on him to do it and that enjoys the pleasure or feels the sorrow for the good or bad karmas.

It is true God is not affected in any manner, but it is the parental pleasure or sorrow that God feels in his Lila Vibhuti or manifested Universe. This kind of Thyagam is Sanyasam. Of course an outward Sanyasam is very easy, a verbal Thyagam is equally easy, but to get the internal Sanyasa or Thyagam is difficult But it is not impossible. It is acquired by Abhyasa or practice. The same difficulty was felt and frankly expressed by Arjuna.

చంచలం హి మనః కృష్ణ ప్రమాథిబలవద్దృఢమ్ ।
తస్యాహం నిగ్రహం మన్యే వాయోరివ సుదుష్కరమ్ ॥

O Krishna! mind is fickle and unsteady even over objects congenial and familiar. Is it not difficult to make it steady on the self-realisation by diverting it from its own objects of attraction? I consider it as difficult as to ward off a powerful wind. Says Bhagavan in reply.

అసంశయం మహాబాహో మనోదుర్నిగ్రహం చలమ్ ।
అభ్యాసేన తు కౌంతేయ వైరాగ్యేణ చ గృహ్యతే ॥

It is true mind is fickle and unsteady. But it can be captured by practice and వైరాగ్యం (Vairagyam) or disgust with things other than Atman.

But there is no hope, says Krishna, for one who does not so control the mind to get Mukti. Then Arjuna heckles Krishna by supplementary questions.

> అయతిశ్శ్రద్ధయోపేతో యోగాచ్చలితమానసః ।
> అప్రాప్య యోగసంసిద్ధిం కాం గతిం కృష్ణ గచ్ఛతి ॥
> కచ్చిన్నోభయవిభ్రష్టశ్ఛిన్నాభ్రమివ నశ్యతి ।
> అప్రతిష్ఠో మహాబాహో విమూఢో బ్రహ్మణః పథి ॥

Very pertinent question Arjuna asks.

Suppose one starts yoga with all earnestness and still fails on account of his mischievous mind, what happens to him? Poor man, tempted by your promise of Mukti he abandons all his secular pleasures. Suppose he does not get his Mukti either, he has lost either way; says Bhagavan, no fear, one who is an earnest yogi will not suffer either in this world or in the other. He will enjoy happiness in a higher world for some time and then will be born again in some rich and pure man's house where he will have facilities to continue his Yoga or, he will be born in the family of a Yogi though poor.

He will carry with him all the practices of his previous birth and will achieve Mukti. Thus we find Arjuna heckling Sri Krishna at every stage with questions and doubts, that will arise in any man and for the benefit of mankind elicited the great truths of Yoga. He even insisted on demonstration in the shape of Viswarupa Darshanam being granted to him, to verify the

statements of Bhagavan. Bhagavan having come face to face with Arjuna, in a communicable form, had to submit himself to a severe cross-examination and to proof of statements. The result is the whole mankind if so minded is benefited by the exposition. It is only after giving regular proof to Arjuna about the divine form, Arjuna's mind became receptive to the next important topic of భక్తియోగ (BHAKTI YOGA).

LECTURE IV.

Bahktiyoga.

యేతుసర్వాణి కర్మాణి మయిసన్న్యస్యమత్పరాః ।
అనన్యేనైవయోగేన మాంధ్యాయన్త ఉపాసతే ॥
తేషామహం సముద్ధర్తామృత్యు సంసారసాగరాత్ ।
భవామి నచిరాత్పార్థమయ్యా వేశితచేతసామ్ ॥

Let all acts secular as well as spiritual be done in my name. Think of nothing else than devotion to me. I will in a very short time relieve you from the bondage of Karma, from births and deaths.

This is the assurance given to a devotee by the most benevolent God. He wants nothing but devotion to Him. He then becomes the slave of the Bhaktha. Was this not given by God at a time when he was serving as a charioteer under Arjuna? what greater proof of the easy accessibility of God to a Bhakta can there be?

Andal in Tiruppavai says :—

அன்றிவ்வுலகமளந்தாயடி போற்றி
சென்றங்குத் தென்னிலங்கைச் செற்றாய் திறள் போற்றி
பொன்றச் சகடமுதைத்தாய் புகழ் போற்றி
கன்று குணிலாவெறிந்தாய் கழல் போற்றி
குன்று குடையாவெடுத்தாய் குணம் போற்றி
என்றுன்றன் சேவகமே யேற்றிப் பறைகொள்வாள்
இன்று யாம் வந்தோமிரங்கேலோ ரெம்பாவாய்.

The entire outlook of Arjuna was changed after he saw Viswarupam of Bhagavan. Gita is a highly psychological treatise. Starting with Arjuna as a type of man not knowing the elementary truths of existence,

there is given a gradual education in the highest truths. Arjuna has been but a warrior, an archer and an amorous young man. To him Bhagavan begins his spiritual education. To him at first his teacher was no more than a mere friend and a relation. So at every stage he was wondering whether Sri Krishna was really speaking the voice of a higher power–in fact–the voice of God Himself. The steps in education went up from theories to demonstration in the shape of Viswarupadarsanam. Then Arjuna's eyes were opened and he expressed thus.

అనన్తవీర్యామిత విక్రమస్త్వం ।
సర్వం సమాప్నోషి తతోఽసి సర్వః ॥

You are the Omnipotent; you sustain the entire universe by your pervasion. So you are really the whole universe.

This is what Arjuna discovered but what was his idea before that discovery and illumination?

సఖేతి మత్వా ప్రసభం యదుక్తం ।
హే కృష్ణ హే యాదవ హే సఖేతి ॥
అజానతా మహిమానం తవేదం ।
మయా ప్రమాదాత్ప్రణయేన వాపి ॥
యచ్చావహాసార్థమసత్కృతోఽసి ।
విహారశయ్యాసనభోజనేషు ॥
ఏకోఽథవాప్యచ్యుత తత్సమక్షం ।
తత్క్షామయే త్వామహమ ప్రమేయం ॥

Hitherto out of my ignorance as to who really you are, I, out of mistake of intimacy took you to be

only my friend; I was familiarly addressing you as Oh! Krishna; Oh! Yadava; Oh! friend and so on. I might have been cutting jokes with you either when we were alone at the time of wandering, sleeping, dining &c, or in the presence of others even. I crave your pardon for all my mistakes and misdemeanours done out of my ignorance.

పితాసి లోకస్య చరాచరస్య ।
త్వమస్య పూజ్యశ్చ గురుర్గరీయాన్ ॥
నత్వత్సమోఽస్త్యభ్యధికః కుతోఽన్యో ।
లోకత్రయేఽప్యప్రతిమప్రభావ ॥

You are the Lord of all things moveable and immoveable; you are the father of all living beings; you are the guru; you are the great and the reverend; In the three worlds who is equal to you? Then where does the question of a greater one arise?

తస్మాత్ప్రణమ్య ప్రణిధాయ కాయం ।
ప్రసాదయే త్వామహమీశమీడ్యమ్ ॥
పితేవ పుత్రస్య సఖేవ సఖ్యుః ।
ప్రియాః ప్రియాయార్హసి దేవసోఢుమ్ ॥

I therefore completely prostrate before you. I make you most accessible to me. You like a father to a son, friend to a friend will bear with me in all my faults.

After this Arjuna became eminently fitted to receive instructions on Bhakti Yoga.

మయ్యేవ మనఆధత్స్వ మయిబుద్ధిం నివేశయ ।
నివసిష్యసి మయ్యేవ అత ఊర్ధ్వం నసంశయః ॥

Then concentrate all your mind on me. Then alone you will live in me.

అథ చిత్తం సమాధాతుం న శక్నోషి మయి స్థిరమ్ ।
అభ్యాసయోగేన తతో మామిచ్ఛాప్తుం ధనంజయ ॥

If you think that you are unable to concentrate on me forth-with try to get into that practice.

అభ్యాసేఽప్యసమర్థోఽసి మత్కర్మపరమో భవ ।
మదర్థమపి కర్మాణి కుర్వన్ సిద్ధిమవాప్స్యసి ॥

If you are unable even to practice meditation on me, then perform acts in my service and let all your acts be such as will be pleasing to me.

అథైతదప్యశక్తోఽసి కర్తుం మద్యోగమాశ్రితః ।
సర్వకర్మఫలత్యాగం తతః కురు యతాత్మవాన్ ॥

If you are unable to be doing only such acts as are in my service, then at least give up all desire for fruits in acts done by you in the usual course. Even then you will gradually rise to the stage necessary for attaining mukti.

అద్వేష్టా సర్వభూతానాం మైత్రః కరుణ ఏవ చ ।
నిర్మమో నిరహంకారః సమదుఃఖసుఖః క్షమీ ॥
సంతుష్టః సతతం యోగీ యతాత్మా దృఢనిశ్చయః ।
మయ్యర్పితమనోబుద్ధిర్యో మే భక్తః స మే ప్రియః ॥

(1) Towards every person or object in the universe, friendship, love, sympathy and non-hatred are essential. There is no use going to a temple and making haratis,

repeating Sahasranamamams, and Parayanams and making Japams unless they are accompanied by universal love and sympathy. This love and sympathy will not come in unless one gives up ahankaram, conceit, false pride in his knowledge or wealth, his own purity or righteousness and in the corresponding contempt for others less knowing, less wealthy, less righteous than himself. There is the Lord of all who is always busy in his task of levelling, correcting and elevating the Jivans. There is no greater obstacle to the Jivan's salvation than this Ahankaram. So says Nammalwar.

> நீர்நுமதென்றிவை வேர்முதல் மாய்த்து।
> இறைசேர்மின் உயிர்க்கதனேர் நிலையில்லையே॥

Eradicate root and branch that "I'ness." There is no other path to Mukti.

Equilibrium of mind in sorrow and pleasure alike is essential. Sorrow and pleasure alike have depressing effects. Of course it may be difficult for any one not to feel sorry when a dear object is lost. It is equally difficult to suppress the pleasure when any occasion arises for joy. One who conquers the one will conquer the other also. It is only to demonstrate the difficulty Sri Rama acting as a man among men began to weep when he was told in the forest that his father Dasaratha died. After weeping Sri Rama explains the philosophy of death.

> యథా కాష్ఠం చ కాష్ఠం చ సమేయాతాం మహార్ణవే।
> సమేత్య చ వ్యపేయాతాం కాలమాసాద్య కించన॥
> ఏవం భార్యాశ్చ పుత్రాశ్చ జ్ఞాతయశ్చ ధనాని చ।
> సమేత్యచవ్యవధావంతి ధ్రువో హ్యేషాం వినాభవః॥

Just as in a sea two pieces of wood, say Katamarams, are brought together by one wave and separated by another wave, so are fathers, sons, wives, brought together by one wave and separated by another wave. These are the accidents in the universe for which there is no need for grief. In the Sankhya Yoga Chapter of Gita this philosophy is fully amplified. In fact the very root of Gita is Arjuna's (Vishadam). Arjuna as a warrior must have killed a great many in his lifetime. But in the great war he was face to face with cousins, brothers, close relations and Gurus. To kill them or have them killed, was his great sorrow. Therefore the first topic in Gita is the philosophy of life and death; attachment and detachment. This attachment to friends and relations grows only in mankind. A cow does not know its own calf after the period of suckling is over. But in man the attachment not only extends to whole life but chases the Jivan even after the death, even to the worlds beyond. Therefore Sri Krishna of the Gita first points out the existence of soul and body as separate entities. For which of these is the sorrow felt. Is it for the loss of the soul or for the loss of the body. If it is for the soul, the soul never dies. Why then sould there be sorrow over a continuously existing and never perishing object: Is it for the loss of the body ? Body is always changing. It is not in the same state at any moment. Is it because the soul has left this body one feels sorrow.

దేహినోస్మిన్ యథాదేహే కౌమారం యౌవనంజరా।
తథాదేహాన్తర ప్రాప్తిర్ధీర స్తత్రఃముహ్యతి ॥

When the soul was in the embryo of the body you

were feeling glad stage after stage. Puchoottal, Seemantham &c., were celebrated with great eclat. You knew not the suffering of the soul in that state.

When the baby was born and it cried you were glad. You know not the suffering in that inarticulate state. When the child cried of indigestion you forced milk into its mouth thinking it to be hunger-cry. If the child was bitten even by a scorpion and cried you try to force milk, down its throat until the scorpion is discovered.

When the body developed further and further into infancy, youth and old age, you were glad in spite of the suffering of the soul, and when the time for the relief of the soul from its sufferings, and bondage came and it left the body in joy you begin to weep. What is the ethics underlying this grief? It is mere selfishness and nothing else. If it is envy or jealousy that will be good indeed.

A is sent to Jail on a sentence of ten years; B follows with a sentence of five years; C with a sentence of one year and D with six months. As each prisoner's term is over he goes out with joy and the surviving companions who had jolly days even in jail life feel sorry for the release of the fellow prisoner. What is the ethics of this sorrow and is it not the same with the surviving bonded Jivans. The very person for whose death you feel sorry is at the same time enjoying the joy of his release.

The underlying reason is mere ignorance and unfortunately for us this ignorance is perpetuated by our referring to the departed, in annual ceremonies as father,

son, wife, husband and so on though from the moment of the death the released Jivan ceased to bear any such relationship to you. The relationship was caused only by the materiality surrounding the Jivan and not by the Jivan. The ceremony is for the Jivan or in the name of the Jivan and not for the body which was cremated and which by dissolution ran back to the respective elements of the Prakriti.

So says Bhagavan

న త్వేవాహం జాతు నాసం న త్వం నేమే జనాధిపాః।
న చైవ న భవిష్యామః సర్వే వయమతః పరమ్॥

Yourself, myself, and these kings here are all eternal. We never were not; we never will not be.

వాసాంసి జీర్ణాని యథా విహాయ।
నవాని గృహ్ణాతి నరోఽపరాణి॥
తథా శరీరాణి విహాయ జీర్ణా।
న్యన్యాని సంయాతి నవాని దేహీ॥

Do you not throw away a torn cloth and go in for another new cloth So also the Jivan when it finds its body to be no longer fit for its occupation leaves it and takes another body. Suppose you say that you know nothing of mysterious Jivan unperciptible by senses or mind and that your sole concern is about the body alone which you have been cherishing as your dearest object. Even then you have known the nature of that dearest object. You have seen how it has been growing from stage to stage. You have seen how it has been

changing its size, form, qualities &c. So there is no need to be sorry when it totally perished.

జాతస్యహి ధ్రువో మృత్యుః ధ్రువం జన్మమృతస్య చ ।
తస్మాదపరిహార్యేర్థే నత్వం శోచితు మర్హసి ॥

That death follows birth and birth follows death are certain. To such an unavoidable course of things why should there be sorrow. In these and numerous other modes of reasoning based on the nature of the Jivan and the Prakriti, Bhagavan Sri Krishna explains the philosophy of life and death and tries to convince every one about the folly of sorrow and pleasure on deaths and births.

Yet one who is convinced and acts up to his conviction is indeed a rare Mahatma.

Perhaps I have made so much of a digression on this philosophy of life and death. But the occasion for the highest degree of sorrow arises on deaths of dearest objects in life and in fact this kind of anticipated sorrow of Arjuna was the root of the whole Gita.

Now then after giving all alternative courses to be adopted, Bhagavan gives his last and the greatest word *viz.*, Charamaslokam.

సర్వధర్మాన్ పరిత్యజ్య మామేకం శరణం వ్రజ ।
అహంత్వాసర్వ పాపేభ్యోమోక్షయిష్యామిమాశుచః ॥

This is one of the three Rahasyams in the Mukti Yoga Sastra. The three Rahasyams are

1. అష్టాక్షరి — Ashtakshari.

2. ద్వయం — Dwayam.

3. చరమశ్లోకం — Charamaslokam.

Orthodox persons will not deal with these three topics except in the close precincts of Gurukula Asrama, except under the requisite Upadesam and Gurudhyanam. There is an injunction against improper promulgation of these rahasyams or secret doctrines,

గురుం ప్రకాశయేద్ధీమాన్ మంత్రం యత్నేన గోపయేత్ ।
అప్రకాశ ప్రకాశాభ్యాం క్షీయేతే సంపదాయుషీ ॥

He is indeed wise who brings credit to his guru and keeps the mantras secret by every effort. If he brings discredit on the Guru or reveals the mantrams he will lose his wealth and longevity.

In spite of this injunction Ramanuja got over the heights of a tower (గోపురం) and revealed the mantrams for the benefit of mankind. But this is treated by the orthodox as only an exception permissible only in the case of an Adhikari-master like Ramanuja. Others cannot plead this precedent.

Gita itself contains similar injunction. Bhagavan warns Arjuna

ఇదంతేనాతపస్కాయ నాభక్తాయ కదాచన ।
నచాశుశ్రూష వేవాచ్యం నచమాం యోభ్యసూయతి ॥

The secret doctrine taught by me to you ought not to be disclosed by you to one who has no tapas, who has

no devotion towards me, who will not render Kain-karyams. To one who hates me these truths ought never to be revealed.

While teaching Gnana Yoga to Arjuna Bhagavan tells Arjuna that he must learn more of it from a Guru and Gnani.

తద్విద్ధి ప్రణిపాతేన పరిప్రశ్నేన సేవయా ।
ఉపదేక్ష్యన్తి తే జ్ఞానం జ్ఞానినస్తత్త్వదర్శినః

Prostrate before a Guru, render all services to Him and by questioning over and again learn the truths. Gnani will initiate you into the mystery of this Yoga very well.

In these days when one cannot command the time or means to seek a Guru, we are falling back on printed books which contain full translations of Bhashyams as well. We have got trimatha Bhashyams in print. Still I may be permitted to state that in spite of all these facilities of self-help there is still something to be learnt under the inspiration of proper Gurus if only one can afford that privilege.

You have been hearing this great solemn subject of the Gita from one who is in every way unworthy of being the teller. I do not say this out of any mock-modesty usually indulged on platforms. I say it with all sincerity and solemnity. I should earnestly request every one of you to study Gita with all solemnity under the inspiring words of one who is really competent to deal with this subject, one who has put in practice the

teachings of Gita and in short one whose example will be in perfect harmony with the precepts of Gita.

I therefore humbly apologise to you for having appeared before you these two or three days pretending to give the lessons of a great work. But in the modern circumstances and exigencies of life we form societies like these and each brother is bound to contribute his mite however poor it may be to the general work of the voluntary association. It is this duty that I have been discharging. I have been doing in these lectures, nothing more than the function of a clerk putting up office notes in a precis to his master.

I fully trust that in my own interests and for my good, you will take my delivering notes in that light and in that light alone.

The last and the Greatest Word: The Charama Slokam.

The last and the greatest word in Gita is what is styled the Charama slokam. It runs as follows:

సర్వధర్మాన్ పరిత్యజ్యమామేకం శరణం వ్రజ ।
అహంత్వా సర్వపాపేభ్యో మోక్షయిష్యామి మాశుచః ॥

Gita, as all know, is a treatise on Yoga Sastra and divided into eighteen chapters. These eighteen chapters were grouped into three divisions by Alavandar. The first six chapters, the middle six and the last six. The principle of this division is the nature of the subject dealt with in each Shatkam or group of six.

జ్ఞానకర్మాత్మికే నిష్ఠే యోగలక్ష్యేసుసంస్కృతే ।
ఆత్మానుభూతిసిద్ధ్యర్థే పూర్వషట్కేన చోదితే ॥

The first six chapters deal with the realization of self or the Individual soul in the man. Though incidentally there were references to Eswara or Paramatman also the main theme was the realization of the Individual soul or Jivatman. For this purpose the first step was the total removal of the false impression that body is the man (దేహాత్మభ్రాంతి). After pointing out the distinction between the Jivan and the perishable body methods of doing actions or Karmas without regard to fruits were taught. With the aid of such Nishkama Karmas and true knowledge as to the nature of the Jivatma the self-realization was shown to be possible to the yogi, that is, to one who with a view to realise the self will go through the necessary steps of Karma and Gnana.

మధ్యమే భగవత్తత్త్వయాథాత్మ్యావాప్తిసిద్ధయే ।
జ్ఞానకర్మాభినిర్వర్త్యో భక్తియోగః ప్రకీర్తితః ॥

In the central six chapters the nature of Paramatman and the supremest goal viz., one of attaining fellowship with the Paramatma the highest eternal bliss are explained and the methods of Bhakti yoga as the means for the attainment of such bliss has also been explained. It has also been pointed out how that Bhakti yoga will not be possible unless the methods of the first six chapters were carefully adopted. Bhakti or devotion can be achieved only by the performance of Swadharma, by the acquisition of Gnana and by the practice of Vairagyam or renunciation.

ప్రధానపురుషవ్యక్త సర్వేశ్వర వివేచనమ్ ।
కర్మధీర్భక్తిరిత్యాది పూర్వశేషో న్తిమోదితః ॥

In the last group of six the nature of Pradhana or Prakriti and its manifestations in the universe, the nature of Jivan and its association with Prakriti in the universe and the nature of Iswara, Chit, Achit and Eswara, are explained in detail and supplementary explanations about Karma, Gnana and Bhakti are also given.

Thus we reach the last stage when Bhagavan gave his last and highest word in the Charama Slokam.

Abandon every method and adopt me alone as your Saviour. I will release you from all sins. Do not be sorry over your sins.

సర్వధర్మాన్ పరిత్యజ్య మామేకం శరణం వ్రజ ।
అహంత్వా సర్వపాపేభ్యో మోక్ష యిష్యామిమాశుచః ॥

This is the literal meaning of this great word. Yet there is a great deal of elucidation on this stanza which Bhashyakarars have been attempting. If after speaking untiringly of Dharmas and Swadharma throughout the Gita, if after giving out a number of methods by which one can get his freedom from bondage, if after explaining specifically the principles of the three main yogas, viz., Karma Yoga, Gnana Yoga, and Bhakti Yoga, there is a sudden statement సర్వధర్మాన్ పరిత్యజ్య.

"Abandoning all Dharmas" one is perplexed whether after all the eighteen chapters were a mere waste and whether the entire Gita may consist of only one stanza viz., this stanza called Charama slokam. One may also ask whether the method shown in this sloka is a made-easy in the place of the elaborate processes requisite for

the other yogas. And if the made-easy process is so simple who will go in for the elaborate processes thereafter. Who will go in for the process of mixtures if ready made tablets are on hand. Some may ask whether there is any reservation in this great word. This sloka refers only to the washing away of sins but does not refer to grant of mukti or fellowship with himself. If so the sloka does not deserve to be put on the high level that the name "చరమశ్లోకం" connotes.

These doubts and many more are raised by Bhasyakarars with their fulness of erudition in all sastras. That is why it is often said శాస్త్రజ్ఞానం బహుక్లేశం బుద్ధేః చలనకారణం

Knowledge of Sastras leads to numerous difficulties and often upsets the mind.

Left alone without the Bhashyams or commentaries of the different schools, lay readers like ourselves would have been satisfied with the meaning that the context gives and the meaning that follows from our understanding of the rest of the Gita. In consonance with the rest of the teachings of Gita, the surface meaning of this sloka will be thus.

(1) సర్వధర్మాన్ పరిత్యజ్య The giving up all dharmas here means the tyagams viz., కర్మఫలత్యాగం and కర్మకర్తృత్వత్యాగం already referred to.

(2) మామేకం శరణం వ్రజ Sri Krishna having already made it clear to Arjuna that he was not a mere friend and charioteer but Bhagavan Himself this means that the Jivan must only look to Paramatma and Paramatma alone for his saviour. There are several devotees in the

spiritual heirarchy of the universe. If they are appealed to they may give some minor gifts to the devotee and even then it is Paramatma that gives through these media. But in the matter of the highest goal a direct appeal to Bhagavan is necessary. If a conviction is given by a second class Magistrate an appeal lies to the Joint Magistrate. He can only do so far; But if a death sentence is given a reprieve can be granted only by the King. But the minor authorities who give smaller reliefs also derive their authority from the King and as such it cannot be said that the King acting through them gives those smaller reliefs. But there is something which no minor officer can give and which the king alone can grant. Similarly to attain mukti a complete washing away of all sins is necessary. There must be a clean sheet before entering the gates of Heaven. Such a thing can be achieved only by falling at the feet of Bhagavan.

There is also a special force in the expression 'మామేకం' and "అహం" in the sloka. Paramatma has five forms-viz., the Absolute, Paratwam (2) Vyuham for Srishti, Stithi & Laya.

(3) Vibhava-Avataras.

(4) Harda-Antaryami.

(5) Archa-Image or Idol form.

Of these Para and Vyuha forms are accessible only in the Mukti stage. Harda or Antaryami is perceptible only by the advanced gnani.

Vibhava is accessible to those contemporaries who know the Avatar as Avatar. This was the form which

was accessible to Arjuna on the spot. And Arjuna was asked to make his Saranagati before the Vibhava form.

Archa form is accessible to all the others in all times and so the great sages and Alwars made their Saranagati at the feet of an Archa form.

(4) " అహంత్వాసర్వపాపేభ్యో మోక్ష ఇష్యామి "

I will relieve you of all your sins. Ordinarily sins can be washed away only by suffering and by not further accumulating.

అవశ్యమనుభోక్తవ్యం కృతంకర్మ శుభాశుభం ॥

One must suffer for bad karmas and enjoy the fruits of good karmas. Both these must be gone through and exhausted before freedom can be obtained by the Jivan.

యద్భవ్యం భవతుభగవన్ పూర్వకర్మానురూపం ॥

Says Kulasekhara Alwar in Mukundamala.

To one who carries out the teachings of Gita, to one who becomes a bhakta to one who craves for freedom from Samsara, if he still feels the weight of his accummulated bag of sins, Bhagavan says "look to me and me alone for that relief and I will take off your burden."

(5) మాశుచః

Do not be sorry over this matter when you have done the rest.

The highest bhakta is the very person who is obsessed with the feeling "I am no doubt devoting myself

to God now to the best of my ability. But I have done and must have done numberless sins in the past. My sufferings are not sufficient punishment yet. How can I then attain Mukti ?". To them Bhagavan gives this Abhayapradanam – Tirumangai Alwar's Prapathi was —

பற்றேன் ஒன்றுமிலேன் பாவமே செய்து பாவியானேன்
மற்றேல் ஒன்று அரியேன் மாயனே எங்கண் மாதவனே
கல்தேன் பாய்ந்து எழுகும் கமலச்சுனை வேங்கடவா
ஆற்றேன் வந்து அடைந்தேன் அடியேனை ஆட்கொண்டு அருளே.

Then does this stanza make any reference to the grant of mukti ?

Suppose all sins are washed away is not the Jivan free from sins entitled to get mukti ? So inferentially as a matter of necessary consequence he must get mukti. Should he not ? If sins are due to bad karmas and if sins are washed away only the bad karmas are written off and the penalties of suffering are withdrawn But the same Jivan must have done also some good karmas which must bear fruit. The fruit may be by Swarga (Bhogam) may be even the seat of Indra (Indrapadavi) or may be even the place of Brahma ? Without those fruits being enjoyed he cannot get mukti. In a sense from the point of view of mukti, even good karmas are akin to sins as all obstacles to mukti come under one category." సర్వపాపేభ్యః here means all obstacles to mukti and the work "పరిత్యజ్య or "సర్వధర్మాన్ పరిత్యజ్య" means giving up all that is connected with Dharmas or Karmas. The Jivan has the right to say "Though I have earned some rewards by good Karmas of mine, I do not want those rewards. I decline them with thanks. I relinquish all my rights in respect of the rewards that I have earned. I seek only my Mukti."

Surely then this sloka means "Relinquish your rights. I accept the relinquishment; seek my pardon for sins; I give you the pardon. Do not therefore feel any trouble over these matters now that you have become a bhakta. In spite of your Bhakti Yoga preceded by Karma and Gnana Yogas, you have now to make this Saranagati to free you from the fears that you entertain about the lingering obstacles." This is the significance of the title "Charama Slokam" given to this last and great word in the Gita.

Usually Gita is associated with three kinds of Yoga, — Karma Yoga, Gnana Yoga and Bakti Yoga. Now through Bhagavan's messengers in this Yuga–Kali Yuga, there was a further elucidation of Gita. Prapathi Yoga as a means to attain Mukti has been spelt out of Gita and that principally from this Sloka called the Charama slokam.

We are now in the Kali age. It is considered that in Kali age Dharmas turn topsy-turvy. Varnas and asramas practically vanish and mixed varnas and mixed asramas, Gunas and Karmas develop in such indiscriminate proportions that individuals do not find their appropriate Varnas or asramas. Births and forms alone form the indicia of varnas and asramas and the gunas and karmas play no part in class determination. The word Swadharma is difficult of application; Gnana is unattainable without Swadarma; Bhakti of the type described in Gita is a rare commodity. In the midst of our business in the day, of tennis and cards in the evening, cinemas and dramas during nights, with villages turned into cities and forests into hunting grounds, with food regulated as bed tea, coffee and chota hazri, break-fast, lunch, evening

tea, night dinner and bed milk, where can we have the time, place and regulations needed and prescribed for bhakti. Perhaps occasional pilgrimages to holy shrines may be reckoned as Bhakti Yoga. But then who is to ascend all the steps of Tirumalai. The sooner a railway communication is opened, the better is the desire of many Bhakti Yogins of this age. Bhagavan is perhaps the greatest diplomat. He knows how to suit every age.

When the Kali Yuga commenced some rishis were anxious to know about the nature of this Kali age. I will quote at some length from the Vishnu Purana.

" Once on a time, the sages assembled and discussed at what season the least morality obtained the greatest reward and by whom it was most easily displayed. In order to terminate the discussion they went to Veda Vyasa to remove their doubts. They saw the illustrious sage immersed in the water of the Ganges and awaiting the close of the ablutions the sages remained on the banks of the river under the shelter of a grove of trees. As Veda Vyasa plunged into the river and rose up from it the sages heard him exclaim "Excellent is the Kali age". Again dived he and again did he exclaim in their hearing " Well done, well done, Sudra, thou art happy." Again he sank down and again did they hear him say " Well done, well done, women; they are happy -- who are more fortunate than they." He finally came out and asked the sages why they came. The sages wanted Veda Vyasa to explain what he meant by his three exclamations Veda Vyasa said " Hear excellent sages why I said 'well done' " The fruit of penance, of silent prayer and the life practised in the Krita age for ten years, in the Treta for one year, in the Dwapara for

a month, is obtained in the Kali age in a day and a night; the reward which a man obtains in the Krita age by abstract meditation, in the Treta by sacrifice, in the Dwapara by devotion, he receives in the Kali age by merely reciting the names of Kesava." *

"Formerly the Vedas were to be acquired by the twice-born through the diligent observance of self-denial and it was their duty to celebrate sacrifices. Hereafter idle prayers, idle fasts, fruitless ceremonies will be performed. There will be irregularities and sins, and so they cannot attain any state. But the Sudra attains to his highest condition by mere service.

Men have to acquire wealth in proper manner and must spend on proper objects. Wealth will hereafter be acquired in improper ways and will be spent on improper purposes. There is much trouble for men but the women by merely honouring and serving her husband gets Mukti."

Thus to suit the ways of mankind in the Kali age, Bhagavan has sent messengers to explain how Prapathi Yoga is also contained in the Gita. That Prapathi Yoga is for one who is imperfect in Dharmas, Gnana and Bhakti and who is incapable of attaining Mukti by faultless performances of Dharmas and Bhakti.

The position of a prapanna is

నధర్మనిష్ఠోస్మి నచాత్మవేది నభక్తిమాం స్త్వచ్చరణారవిందే।
అకించినో ఽనన్యగతిశ్శరణ్యః త్వత్పాదమూలంశరణం ప్రపద్యే॥

"I have no steadiness in Dharmas; I have not realised self in me; I am not a Bhakti Yogi; I have no means; I have no other go; my refuge is your feet."

This method of appealing to God for one's own salvation is what is known as Prapathi Yogam. Does this mean that a mere filling up of a printed application form with these contents will secure one the job of mukti. It will be absurd to think so.

Now let us go back to Karma Yoga, Gnana Yoga, and Bhakti Yoga — are they three separate processes without mixture? Karma Yoga is not possible unless one has the knowledge of Self and God. Gnana Yoga is not possible without proper performance of Karmas. Bhakti Yoga is not possible without proper Karmas and true knowledge. The first essential in everything is the understanding of the Chit, the Achit and Eswara. When that is understood devotion at once arises and all yogas are a mixture of Karma, Gnana and Bhakti.

But in each yoga there are some distinctive marked, predominant features.

కర్మయోగ స్తపస్తీర్థదాన యజ్ఞాదిసేవనమ్ ।

In Karma Yoga there is Tapas, pilgrimage, charity and sacrifice.

జ్ఞానయోగో జితస్వాన్తైః పరిశుద్ధాత్మని స్థితిః ।

In Gnana Yoga there is the concentration on the self—the Jivan with perfect control of mind.

భక్తియోగః పరైకాన్త ప్రీత్యా ధ్యానాదిషు స్థితిః ।

In Bhakti Yoga there is meditation on God alone with the necessary equipments.

త్రయాణామపి యోగానాం త్రిభిరన్యోన్యస్య సంగమః ।

All the three mix up in all the three yogas.

Even so in prapathiyoga none of these can be dispensed with. One cannot dispense with his Swadharma; he cannot dispense with knowledge of the self and Paramatman and the nature and functions of prakriti. Nor can he dispense with Bhakti or devotion to God.

But the essence of prapathi lies in the fact that one realises that the means for Mukti is God Himself and his mercy and not all his Tapas, all his knowledge and his meditation.

ఉపాయతాం పరిత్యజ్యన్య సేద్దేవేతు తామధీః ।
అహం మద్రక్షణ భరో మద్రక్షణఫలం తథా నమమ ॥

Myself, the duty of saving me and the fruit of saving alike are not mine. Even in the requisites of Prapathi what do we find.

అనుకూల్యస్య సంకల్పః ప్రాతికూల్యస్య వర్జనం ।
రక్షిష్యతీతి విశ్వాసః గోప్తృత్వవరణంతథా ।
ఆత్మనిక్షేప కార్పణ్యే షడ్విధాశ్శరణాగతిః ॥

(1) అనుకూల్యస్య సంకల్పః The determination of the prapanna ought to be to do only such acts as will be agreeable to God, to utter such words as will please God and to think such thoughts as will appeal to God. In thought, word and deed he must suit the grace of Bhagavan. This

does not mean that he should abstain from his daily pursuits in life and sit in meditation in solitude. That wil not be real service to God. To serve mankind, to serve the entire creation, to serve the Devatas — all these will be service to God and the real service to God. Every one must do what is his duty — his Swadharma. But in the daily life he must never do anything which will oppose the Law of God.

(2) ప్రాతికూల్యస్య వర్జనం The prapanna must give up everything which will displease God in deed, word or thought.

(3) రక్షిష్యతీతి విశ్వాసః He must have strong faith that Bhagavan alone can save him and that Bhagavan will save him. This is technically known as "మహావిశ్వాసం" The Great Faith.

It is this "మహావిశ్వాస" (The Great Faith) that was referred to by Mahatma Gandhi when he said.

"How much more should I be near to Him when my faith is not a mere apology as it is to-day but has become as immoveable as the Himalayas and as white as the snow on their peaks"

(4) గోప్తృత్వవరణం There must be a prayer as to what the Prapanna wants "Ask and it shall be given; knock and it shall be opened"

(5) ఆత్మనిక్షేపం Surrendering of the Atman before the Paramatman.

(6) కార్పణ్యం Sense of humility, sense of helplessness.

Now what Prapanna has to do has been explained. He must feel helpless even as Arjuna did when he said.

కార్పణ్యదోషోపహతః స్వభావః ।
పృచ్ఛామి త్వాం ధర్మసమ్మూఢచేతాః ॥
యచ్ఛ్రేయః స్యాన్నిశ్చితం బ్రూహి తన్మే ।
శిష్యస్తేహం శాధి మాం త్వాం ప్రపన్నం ॥

Arjuna lost all courage and strength of mind; became overwhelmed with grief and fear; got perplexed as to what to do when he was placed between two armies, particularly when the enemy army had an array of relations friends and gurus. He felt downtrodden and helpless. In this state he appealed to God. It is this kind of condition that is called " కార్పణ్యతా "

Similarly in Ramayana we find Vibhishana's " కార్పణ్యం " when he fell at the feet of Bhagavan Sree Rama.

అనుజో రావణస్యాహం తేన చాస్మ్యవమానితః ।

" I the younger brother of Ravana have been rejected by him and driven out.

భవంతం సర్వభూతానాం శరణ్యం శరణంగతః ।

" To you the protector of the universe, I have come for my protection."

What is the general " కార్పణ్యం " of every prapanna?

" I am helpless; I know of no means for attaining Mukti. I have not that austerity and rigour of a Karma

Yogin; I have not that high knowledge and self-realization which a Gnani possesses; I have not that high steadiness of a true Bhakti Yogin. I am a sinner and a sinner a thousand times; nay millions of times. I am over-burdened with sins. I have not anything good to my credit.

Sage Tirumangai Alvar's ten stanzas of Saranagati before Venkateswara illustrate this.

All these are illustrations of the " కార్పణ్యం "

These are not words of formality but expressions of genuine deep feelings. We may deceive a man by formalities; But God is the searcher of hearts; He is within and without and he cannot be deceived by words.

This last method of Prapathi was given out only at the end of the Gita. This is a proof of great mercy on the part of Bhagavan to save the helpless.

You remember I gave an analogy for the Lila Vibhuti. A father takes half a dozen sons to lake; ties ropes round their waist; holds the other ends in his hand; throws them all in the lake to swim and to get back to the bank again. He sees and watches their struggles; He teaches them how to swim, how to kick with the legs and dash with the hands. He tells them what movements of hands and legs will keep them above water and what will take them into the depth. They all struggle with these instructions and each one takes his own time to successfully swim out. One of them falls helpless; His hands and legs are exhausted. He feels tired and weak; He swallows water; Then he

appeals to father to lift him up himself being unable to swim. The father draws up the rope and draws him out of the water to the bank. This son therefore was saved by Prapathi marga.

Even so does God–the father of all–show the method of prapathi to lift up the helpless Jivan.

So Bhagavan says to Arjuna "If you are unable to carry out any of the methods that I have indicated to give them up.

సర్వధర్మాన్ పరిత్యజ్య మామేకం శరణం వ్రజ !

That is what Sage Nammalwar says.

Give up everything; Having so given up surrender yourself to the Lord of Vaikuntam. Give up all ahankaram and mamakaram. Give up all hopes of attaining mukti by methods which you are not capable of adopting. This is Prapathiyogam. Now in stating this subject of Prapathiyogam I made pointed reference to the Kali age and even hinted that this Prapathiyogam was specially promulgated through God's messengers who came on earth in Kali Yuga. It was pointed out that as between the other Yugas and this Kali yuga there was this difference viz., that in consideration of the decline of Dharma in this yuga and in the special mercy of Bhagavan towards helpless and every mankind in every yuga mukti was made easier in this yuga than in the other yugas. Even Sankeertan will be a useful lift in this yuga. That is what Veda Vyasa hinted.

సకృదుచ్చారితం యేనహరిరిత్యక్షరద్వయం ।
బద్ధః పరికరస్తేన మోక్షాయ గమనం ప్రతి ॥

Even if the two letters "Hari" (హరి) is pronounced once it will put on the path to mukti. Even that becomes very difficult. That is the idea.

But it must not be understood that Prapathiyoga is an altogether new invention made by the sages of Kali yuga, and that it was strained out of the Charama Sloka to give a solemn back-ground for this Yogam. Bhagavan Sri Krishna himself meant by that sloka this Prapathiyoga. He found in his own disciple Arjuna the feeling of diffidence patent on his face at the end of the discourse on the various topics of Karma, Gnana and Bhakti Yogams. So it was intended even for the benefit of Arjuna himself. A craving for speedy mukti must have been created in Arjuna who had the unique privilege of hearing all about the Mokshasastra from Bhagavan direct, who had the unique privilege of having Viswarupadarasanam which sages never enjoyed. His immediate duty was to plunge into a war in which he may or may not have success.

He was taught how to look upon success and defeat with equal indifference. In this state of things even Arjuna required the assuring words of Bhagavan that if he was helpless and incapable of any Yogam he had still the course of prapathi left to him for attaining Mukti. Time was short and a war was impending in which it was Swadharma to enter. After hearing so much about Mukti and particularly having had the unique privilege of Viswarupadarsanam Arjuna might have exhibited a feverish desire to attain fellowship with Paramatman without delay. That is a speciality with Prapathiyogam. It gives speedy mukti even as the helpless drowning son was brought ashore by the father earlier than the capable

yet struggling sons who were still at the swimming in the lake.

ఏతద్దేహావసానే మాం త్వత్పాదం ప్రాపయస్వయం।

" When the soul leaves this very body it may be at your feet " is the prayer of the prapanna. Karma, Gnana, Bhakti Yogams are prolonged processes which may be completed after more births. It is not so with prapathiyogam.

Still we find Bhaktiyogam being practised by several Yogis and Sages. When once one gets into the stage of Bhakti, to the exclusion of all secular objects, he really gets the great bliss even when in body. It is a real Jivan Mukti for him. They are not afraid of births and bondage as it is no longer as bondage in their case.

Take a house where *A* is the master of the house. He has his wife, sons, relations *etc.*, and also servants. *A* can command anything in the house whereas the servant cannot so command. He must obey every one in the house. His position is therefore bondage and he likes to be free. The master commands everything in the house. He can even pull down and reconstruct or build a new house for him or go in for another house where also he will be master. Such is the position of the Jivan when it has become master and not a slave of the senses, the mind and the gunas. So what does it matter whether such a Jivan is in a body or free from body. Such is the pleasure of a Bhakti Yogin.

Kulasekhara Alwar and Andal for example were never afraid of births and rebirths but they wanted their steady Bhakthi to continue.

ఏతత్ప్రార్థ్యం మమ బహుమతం జన్మజన్మాంతరేపి త్వత్పాదాంభోరుహయుగగతే నిశ్చలా భక్తిరస్తు.

எற்றைக்கும் ஏழ் ஏழ் பிறவிக்கும் உன்றன்னோடு ।
உற்றோமேயாமு முனக்கே நாமாட்செய்வோம் ॥

Thus we find the mentality of the Bhakti Yogins that they find the body to be more a help to their devotion and service than an obstacle. Tirumangaya Alwar for example wants immediate Mukti.

நாயேன் வந்தடைந்தேன் நல்கியாள் என்னைக்கொண்டருளே.

General.

I have thus completed my feeble attempt to give to my friends the outlines of Gita to the extent to which I have been able to grasp the great teachings.

We have come to read and understand the principles of Gita apart from the incidents of the great war.

Gita as we find it is a Mukti-Yoga Sastra and not a piece of elocution to induce Arjuna to fight.

Dhritarashtra-Sanjaya.

It is noteworthy that the first stanza in Gita is the aspect of Dhritarashtra and the last stanza is that of Sanjaya.

Dhritarashtra, the blind represents the *Tamas* whose manifestations form the obstacle to the Jivan's Mukti. *Sanjaya* means the great victory. It is the victory of the Jivatma in its stuggle with Prakriti. Gita opens with the question proceeding from the Tamas as to how

the fight between Jivan and Prakriti will be carried on and ends with.

యత్రయోగేశ్వరః కృష్ణో యత్రపార్థోధనుర్ధరః ।
తత్ర శ్రీర్విజయోభూతిర్ధ్రువా నీతిర్మతిర్మమ ॥

Sanjaya's answer to the question is the last stanza in Gita. Where Paramatma and Jivatma are spiritually face to face there every bliss results. The eighteen chapters describe the struggle and the methods employed by the Jivan to obtain its freedom–absolute mukti from

Lessons of the Gita are

(1) One should do his duty without an eye on the results.

(2) One should serve the humanity as that is the best service to God.

(3) The Jivatma everywhere is just the same as yours; The prakritic matter is likewise just the same as that which covers you; The Antaryamin is the same every where.

(4) Even if one loves himself, that love will develop into universal fove.

Just place yourself in a room fitted with mirrors all round and on the top and the floor you will then see yourself endlessly in whatever direction you turn. Think then that the whole universe is yourself and love the universe as you love yourself.

If this room is the maya of the mirror the universe is the Maya of God.

What does Viswarupa Sandarsanam teach. Arjuna sees everything of the universe in Bhagavan. But the strange thing is that Arjuna does not see himself or his brothers in that Viswarupam. It is not that they are outside the universe which was exhibited. It teaches Arjuna that whatever he may think of himself he is a negligible factor in the great Universe.

Thus the Jivan rid of all pride, rid of all desires, rid of all karma reaches the goal–Mukti.



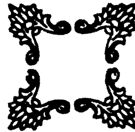
APPENDIX.

The Holy Number Three.

1. Trinity	....	Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara.
2. Three functions	....	Srishti, Sthithi and Laya.
3. Tatvams	....	Chit, Achit and Eswara.
4. Yogams	....	Karma, Gnana and Bhakti.
5. Swarupam	....	Sat, Chit and Anandam.
6. Pranavam	..	Aa, oo and Ma.
7. Truths	....	Om, Tat and Sat.
8. Devotees	....	Aiswaryarthi, Kaivalyarthi and Mokshartbi.
9. Time	...	Past, present and future.
10. Three stages	....	Bhaddha, Mukta and Nitya.
11. Trikaranams	....	Thought, word and deed.
12. Three rahasyams	....	Ashtakshari, Dwayam and Charma Slokam.
13. Achamanam	....	Three times-Achyuta, Ananta and Govinda.
14. Tridandam	....	Sanyasin's emblem.
15. Three prayers	....	Morning, noon and evening.
16. Three degrees of pindams.		
17. Holy thread	....	Three strings.
18. Namams	....	Three upward lines.
19. Trimatam	....	Advaitam, Dvaitam and Visistadvaitam.
20. Tripartite manifestation	....	Fire, water and earth.
21. Three manifestations	....	Antaryami, Vibhava and Archa (for Lila).

22.	Three vyuhams	Sankarshana Anirudha and Pradyumna.
23.	Three periods	Adi, Madhya and Antam.
24.	Three pramanams	Pratyaksham, Anumanam and Agamam.
25.	Three relations between Chit and Eswara	Sesha and Seshi Adhara and Adheyam and Niyantri and Niyamyam.
26.	Christian	Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
27.	Three mantras	Hraswam, Deergham and Plutham.
28.	Three doshams in body	Vatham, Pitham and Sleshmam.

29. Three lokams.
30. Three genders.
31. Three degrees.
32. Three parts of speech and
33. Three persons and so on in almost everything.



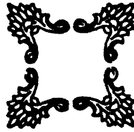
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